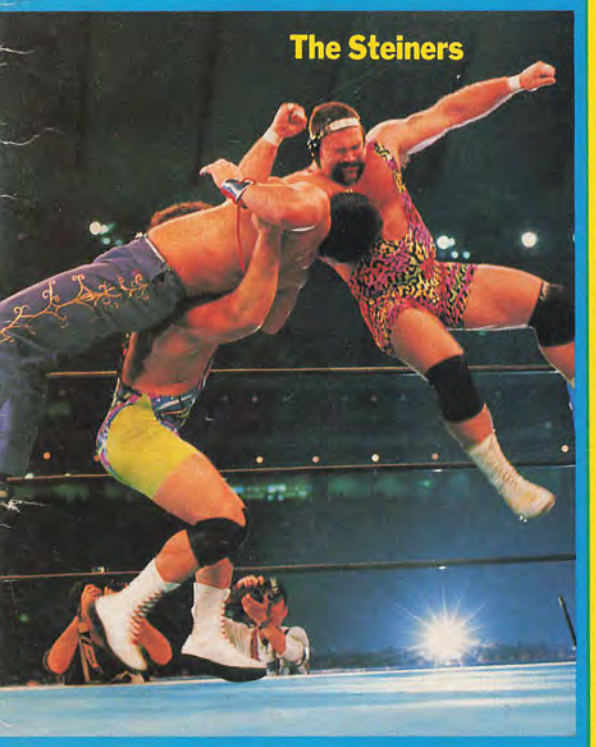
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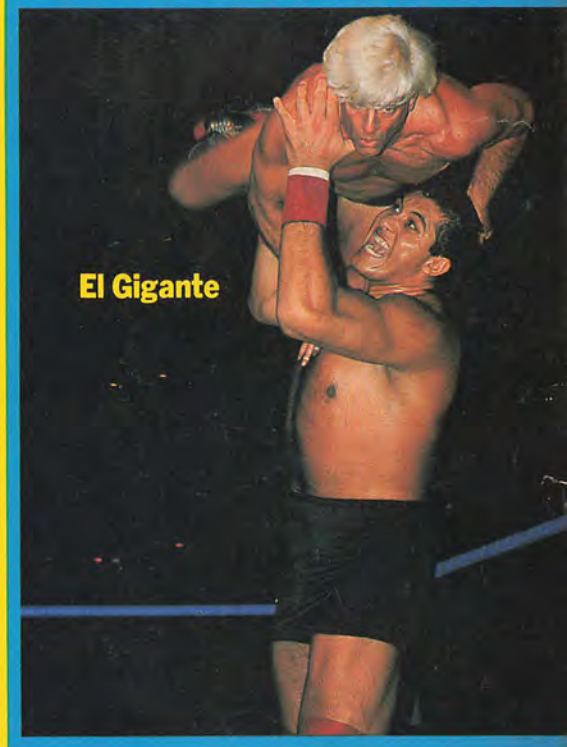
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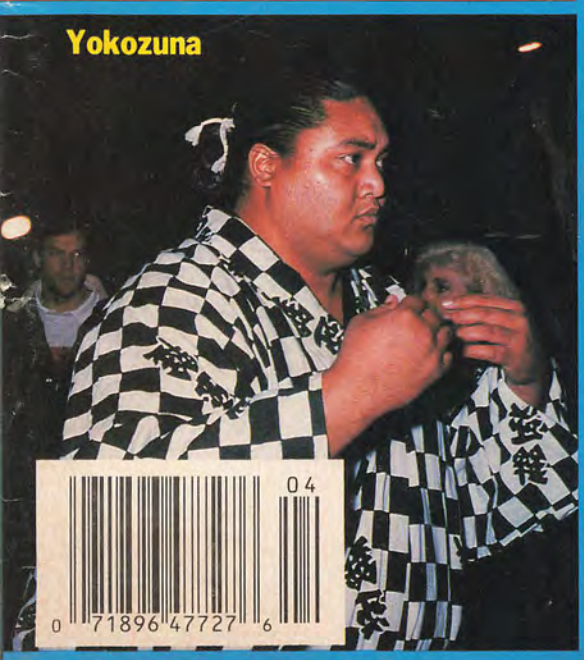
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INSIDE Wrestling

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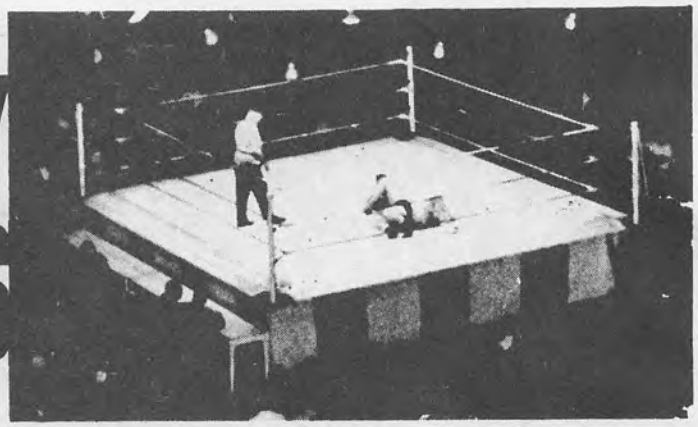
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CHRISTMAS STOMPING

I really enjoyed your *"Inside Wrestling's* Holiday Wish List" (February 1993). It was very funny and quite imaginative. I was especially glad to see your wish for Madusa, that she should take on Missy Hyatt in a no-disqualification steel cage match.

I, too, would love to see them fight it out to determine once and for all who the real first lady of WCW is. Unlike most people, I think Missy would win the match. Sure, Madusa has a lot of wrestling experience, but Missy has wrestled some, too. She proved in the bikini contest that she matches up well with Madusa physically. Missy would win a wrestling bout just as convincingly. You shouldn't underestimate her athletic ability.

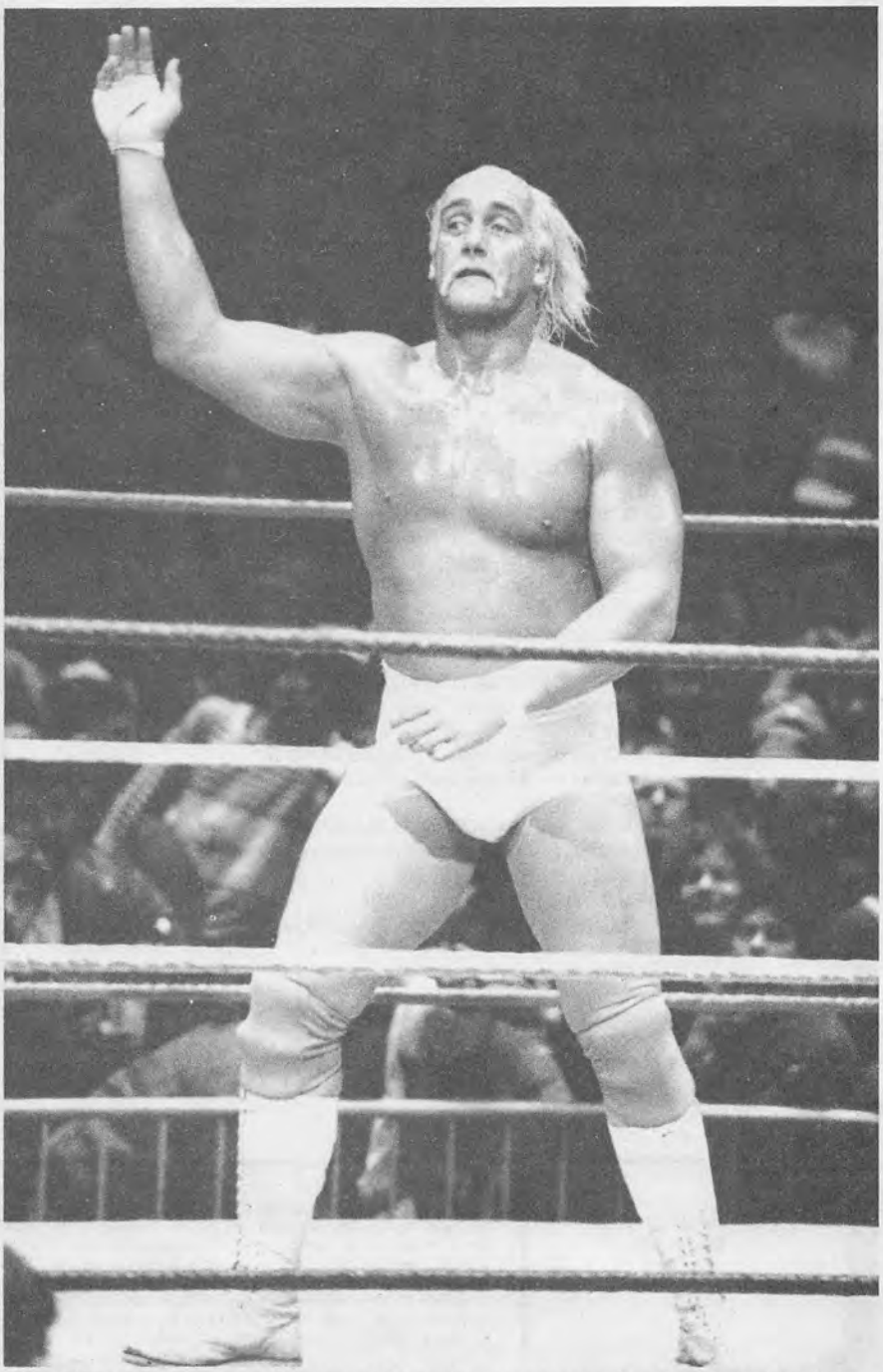
HAROLD RAMBIS
St. Joseph, MO

My two favorite wishes were the ones for Jim Cornette (a new racket and a switch to decaf) and The Moondogs (a bathtub). I also liked the one about Vince McMahon (a new suit). Keep up the good work!

SARAH MENDENHALL
Frankfort, KY

You say you wish Hulk Hogan would come back, and I couldn't agree more. Wrestling needs Hulk now more than ever. The sport needs a major shot in the arm, courtesy of the "Hulkster." In 1993, I would love to see him back.

CAREY NORIN
Butte, MT



If wrestling is going to return in 1993 to the prominence it enjoyed in the 1980s, it desperately needs Hulk Hogan to return to the ring, in the opinion of reader Carey Norin.

NEVER TOO RUDE

This is in regard to your story on Rick Rude ("Biceps, Babes, & Belts: Is Rick Rude Too Greedy For His Own Good?" February 1993). I think you're nuts! What is wrong with Rude trying to overachieve? He is a champion and a winner, and as such he wants it all, to his credit.

Rude has been U.S. champion for more than a year. That alone proves his greatness. You guys love taking shots at him, but he's not going to go down so easily. The "Ravishing One" rules!

PERRY THOMAS
Ocala, FL

SMOKIN'!

I was glad to see an article on the Smoky Mountain federation ("Smoky Mountain: The Best Wrestling You've Never Seen!" February 1993). That league has really done a fine job assembling top talent, men like "Prime Time" Brian Lee and Tony Anthony. Of course, there's that joker Jim Cornette, but you can't have everything your way.

My wish is that Smoky Mountain becomes a solid number three to the WWF and WCW. I realize life for smaller promotions is often tough, but I believe Smoky Mountain has a good shot.

PETER FARMER
Wilmington, DE

DUSTIN VS. BARRY

After reading the "One On One" pitting Dustin Rhodes against Barry Windham (February 1993), I'm more convinced than ever that their breakup was one of the saddest things to happen in the sport in 1992.

Dustin and Barry had the chance to become a truly great tag team. Heck, they even won WCW Tag Team of the Year—after they split up! Blame it on Barry's bullheadedness, and blame it on Dustin, too. He could have been a little more compromising, perhaps taking on a little meaner attitude. He didn't necessarily have to become a rulebreaker, just more aggressive.

Maybe soon they'll both see how wrong they were and get back together. Unfortunately, I doubt that will ever happen.

MARY LOU MYERS
Cicero, IL



Brian Lee and Tony Anthony (above) are just two of the rising stars that are making Smoky Mountain Wrestling an exciting federation, according to reader Peter Farmer.



The unpredicatble Cactus Jack doesn't have the discipline and The Barbarian does not possess the skill needed to capture the WCW World title, says reader Tina Ashwari.

CACTUS JOKE

Cactus Jack can boast and brag all he wants; I'm not going to listen to another word he says. In "Hotseat" (February 1993), Jack makes the laughable assertion: "If my boys can't win the World title, I will!"

First of all, Jack, your "boys"—Tony Atlas and The Barbarian—are never going to win the WCW World belt, so don't worry about that. Secondly, forget about your own title aspirations. The way you wrestle now,

(Continued on page 52)

SAKS' NOTEBOOK

By Stu Saks

Cynics (and there are many of them among the working press) point to the WWF's efforts to raise money to aid the Somalian relief effort and conclude that the federation is doing damage control after the public relations disaster that was 1992. Personally, I don't care what their motives are. And I'm certain that the Somalians who will be the beneficiaries of at least $100,000 in medicine, food, and relief supplies don't care either.

Vince McMahon and his wife, Linda, called a Manhattan press conference to announce that the entire gate receipts from the January 29 Madison Square Garden card, plus individual donations by the wrestlers, would be donated to the Red Cross, which would distribute funds to Keysaney Hospital in Mogadishu and provide meals for starving victims of the war-torn African country.

"It is a tragedy that innocent children and adults are starving to death," McMahon said. "As a parent and as part of an organization devoted to family entertainment, I feel particularly affected and want to do everything I can to help solve this horrible situation."

No, McMahon's motives don't concern me in the least. Sure, he could have made his donation without making a big public splash about it, but if he's willing to put up the bucks, he's entitled to any positive press that goes along with his good works. It should also be noted that the total donation, while guaranteed by McMahon to be a minimum of $100,000, is contingent upon the gate receipts, and hopefully that knowledge would have inspired a Garden sellout.

"We are grateful that the WWF recognizes the need of the people of Somalia," said the Red Cross' Martha Bernstein.

So are we.

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NAMES MAKI

BIG VAN VADER defeated ***Ron Simmons*** to regain the WCW World title, his second, on December 30 at the Baltimore Arena.

Vader's victory ended the "All-American's" four-month, 28-day championship reign, which began with a win over Vader in Baltimore.

Simmons dominated the first 10 minutes of the bout. He was particularly effective with his powerslams and clotheslines, one of which sent Vader tumbling over the top rope.

The ex-champion's left shoulder was hurt after Vader (who was accompanied by his manager, ***Harley Race***) heaved him into the turnbuckle. Over the next



BIG VAN VADER

several minutes, Vader worked on the injured shoulder, finally pinning the "All-American" following a shoulderbreaker.

For more on the title match, see ***Chris Bernucca's*** "On The Road" column on page 10.

Rev. Slick's sudden interest in ***Kamala's*** career is one of the most surprising developments in the sport. The preacher is attempting to convince the "Ugandan Giant" that sticking with his manager, ***Harvey Wippleman***, and his handler, ***Kim Chee***, would be a big mistake.

Wippleman and Kim Chee began coming down particularly hard on Kamala after he lost to ***The Undertaker***



KAMALA

at SummerSlam '92. Some, like ***Bobby Heenan***, think Kamala needs the discipline. But Slick says it's time for the rulebreaker to declare his independence and turn his career around.

A "good" Kamala? Why not?

Yokozuna already has begun receiving matches against WWF World champion ***Bret Hart*** . . . With recent wins over ***Rick Martel***, former World champ ***Bob Backlund*** is proving his comeback was no pipe dream.

Ron and ***Don Harris*** are the new USWA tag team champions. On December 28 in Memphis, the twin brothers defeated ***The Moondogs*** to capture the belts.

"I always said that once me and my brother got the chance, we'd make the most of it," Ron Harris boasted. "We kicked butt in Oregon and we're doing the same here. The age of The Moondogs is over, man!"

Not quite. That same night, there was something called a "Moondog" battle royal. It was set up like the Royal Rumble with this difference: Each participant was allowed to bring a wooden board into the ring! ***Moondog Spike*** won by pinning Ron Harris after ***Moondog Spot*** hit Ron with a bone. No one could ever accuse the USWA of not being creative.

Earthquake is back in the news. On a West Coast Championship Wrestling card on December 26 in Cloverdale, British Columbia, the mighty mauler exchanged hate-filled



"EARTHQUAKE" JOHN TENTA

N' NEWS

Bill Apter reporting...



TOMMY ROGERS

glances with ***"Playboy" Buddy Rose***. 'Quake, who now is billed as ***"Earthquake" John Tenta***, was scheduled to begin competing in West Coast in January.

Jimmy Snuka, ***Hercules***, ***Ax***, ***Nikolai Volkoff***, ***Tommy Rogers***, ***Kerry*** and ***Kevin Von Erich***, and ***Chris*** and ***Toni Adams*** are scheduled to tour Nigeria in April. Kerry, by the way, defeated ***Mr. Wrestling III*** on December 28 in McAllen, Texas, to win the United States Wrestling Federation title . . . ***Bubba Fangman*** won the Texas light heavyweight championship with a victory over ***Ed Robinson*** on December 26 in Marshall, Texas.

In the WWC, ***El Vigilante*** and ***Mohammad Hussein*** captured the tag team title from ***Ray Gonzalez*** and ***Rex King*** on Christmas Day in Bayamon, Puerto Rico . . . Big D, which presented cards in Dallas, Texas, throughout most of 1992, has closed up shop.

In November, ***Kevin Sullivan*** perpetrated an incredibly horrendous act when he stabbed ***"Prime Time" Brian Lee*** with a metal spike 44 times. The bloody attack sidelined the former Smoky Mountain champion for weeks.

On December 27 in Beckley, West Virginia, Lee took his revenge by pinning Sullivan in a wild, anything-goes match. Lee said afterward that he considers it the most satisfying win of his career.

"Sullivan is a sick, twisted individual," Lee said. "He oughta be kicked out of the sport and locked up. But as long as he's allowed to compete, good



KEVIN SULLIVAN

folks should band together and give him a serious attitude adjustment. If it takes another anything-goes match, so be it! I'll wrestle that guy until all the fight is taken out of him!"

On the same card, ***The Heavenly Bodies—Stan Lane*** and ***Tom Prichard***—lost to Smoky Mountain tag champs ***The Rock 'n' Roll Express***, then were stunned by an attack from ***Robert Fuller*** and ***Jimmy Golden—The Stud Stable***.

Bodies manager ***Jim Cornette***, who also was targeted by the Stable, was bursting with outrage.

"They call *us* the rulebreakers!" screamed Cornette. "Man, we're the *victims!* It's time for [SMW Commissioner] ***Bob Armstrong*** to get off our backs and get on the Stable's case! I demand action—now!"



JIM CORNETTE

It's rulebreakers against rulebreakers in the GWF, too. On December 18 in Dallas, after ***"Maniac" Mike Davis*** pinned ***Steve Simpson***, Davis was bashed with a garbage can by ***John Tatum*** and ***Rod Price***. The fans are now cheering Davis and his stuffed monkey "valet"!

Isn't there any honor among thieves anymore? On the other hand, maybe these guys deserve what they're getting.

That's all for now. See you at the matches! □

ON THE ROAD

with CHRIS BERNUCCA

THE FIRST MATCH between Big Van Vader and Small Copy Editor took place at the Byrne Meadowlands Arena on March 31, 1992. Like most of Vader's matches, it was no contest.

Vader was pacing the hallway that connected the dressing rooms to the arena runway. Although he had not yet wrestled, he was sweating and breathing heavily. He would stop pacing only to gather phlegm from his throat and spit onto the tiled floor. At one point, he appeared as if he were going to vomit.

I probably stared at him longer than I should have. He felt my gaze upon him and turned toward me with a glare that would have frozen a lonely deer on the double-yellow line of the interstate. Big Van Vader had pinned me with his eyes.

Some wrestlers, like Rick Steamboat, rely on scientific brilliance. Others, like Steve Williams, employ brute strength. Still others, like 2 Cold Scorpio, use aerial wizardry. Vader's best weapon is the unbridled fear he instills in his opponents.

This is not to belittle Vader's wrestling skills. A former All-American offensive lineman at Colorado and member of the Los Angeles Rams, he knows a little bit about pushing people around. He uses the ropes better than any other big wrestler, and his power bomb is the most debilitating finisher in the sport.

Vader didn't need the power bomb to dispense of WCW World champion Ron Simmons on December 30 at the Baltimore Arena. With one vicious toss into the turnbuckle, Vader rendered the left arm of Simmons useless for the remainder of the match. He won the match with a shoulderbreaker and regained the title he probably never should have lost in the first place.

Last July, Vader handled Sting with similar ease, using the power bomb to knock him unconscious and win his first WCW World title. Three weeks later, he was screwed out of the championship by a series of events more bizarre than Doink the Clown.

That's right, screwed. Vader was prepared for a rematch with Sting, but the federation's self-appointed Sir Galahad had to save his newest best friend, Nikita Koloff, from a two-on-one attack. Seconds later, Sting was the victim of consecutive DDTs by Jake Roberts, his newest worst enemy. Simmons received the title shot when he won an eight-man impromptu lottery conducted by Executive Vice President Bill Watts. With literally no preparation time for an opponent he had never wrestled before, Vader lost the belt in under 10 minutes.

Getting screwed is nothing new to Vader. At Halloween Havoc, he ended up defending the U.S. title for Rick Rude. Vader earned half the winner's purse for his destruction of Koloff, but never received any title matches he claims he was promised by Paul E. Dangerously, Rude's manager at the time.

Vader has a distaste for the games played by federation officials and wheeler-dealer managers. Instead, he likes to play something he often refers to as the "pain game." In April, he caught Sting in mid-splash and spiked him to the canvas, breaking two of his ribs and sidelining him for a month. In October, Vader ended the career of preliminary wrestler Joe Thurman, breaking his back with the power bomb.

As federation officials milled about while emergency medical technicians stabilized Thurman's head and neck for transport to a hospital, fan favorites gathered in small circles of conversation and spoke in hushed tones. Suddenly, a room full of oversized men with an abnormal threshold of pain were all quite aware of their own mortality. The scene was not unlike the unfortunate incident involving New York Jets defensive lineman Dennis Byrd, who broke his neck in a collision with a teammate in November.

This is how Vader plays the "pain game." He breaks the champion's ribs in a disqualification loss, just to let his opponents know he is a tad off-center. He breaks a youngster's back at a TV taping, just to make sure everyone is watching. Everything is done to maximize the fear factor in the fan favorites' locker room. He is very successful at it.



Big Van Vader

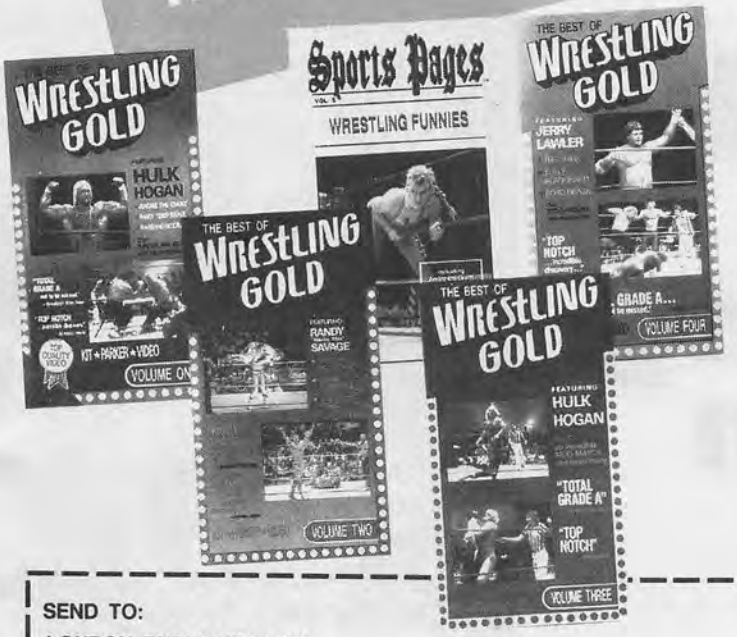
Vader is the sport's Godzilla. He is an oversized monster who crushes everyone and everything in his path with merciless rage. It is somewhat ironic that both first made their name by destroying Japan.

In the locker room following his victory over Simmons, Vader was far more approachable than he was that windy March night at the Meadowlands. In fact, he was almost smiling. But something still stopped me from doing my job. It might have been the memory of his stare. It might have been his intimidating physical presence. It might have been the knowledge that he could snap me like a strand of uncooked spaghetti. Again, I had been pinned.

I am not afraid to say that I am afraid of Big Van Vader. At 450 pounds, he is thrice my size. However, there are a number of men in WCW much bigger than me who are also afraid of Big Van Vader, and they are afraid to say it. □

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TOP SECRET

Behind the Dressing Room Door

by David Rosenbaum

[Editor's note: Due to a printing error, several copies of the February 1993 "Behind The Dressing Room Door" repeated a portion of the December '92 column. The February '93 column is reprinted in its entirety on page 57. We apologize for this mistake.]

AT NOON ON December 28, Sting was snoring loudly on the couch of his Atlanta apartment. He had invited a reporter—me!—to follow him around on the day of Starrcade '92, but now following Sting meant watching his head nod from side-to-side as it hung precariously over the edge of the arm rest.

It was going to be a busy day, and Sting needed his sleep.

Three hours earlier he sprung out of bed, answered the doorbell, and fixed a breakfast of fresh fruit and fruit juice. He then did some stretching exercises, made a few phone calls to friends, and checked in with WCW to see when wrestlers were due at The Omni.

"These are always the longest days," Sting said. "You're sitting around anticipating the night and there's really nothing to do all day. I can't go out because on the day of a match I don't feel like being recognized, so basically I sit around and do nothing.

"I'm just glad this card is in Atlanta because I have my home here. I'm not sure I'd want to go through what I'm about to go through if I was on the road."

At Starrcade '92, of course, Sting faced the possibility of wrestling three times—in the Lethal Lottery, against Big Van Vader for the King of Cable championship,

(Continued on page 56)

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THE INSIDER

By Eddie Ellner



Stan Hansen meant to show some young fans that wrestlers are more than mere statistics on a chart; they're flesh-and-blood competitors.

[The opinions expressed in "The Insider" are those of Eddie Ellner alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of anyone else on the staff of this magazine.]

LAST MONTH, I described my encounter with the Maskin family, whose cold ability to recite statistics left me simultaneously impressed and saddened. Sure they knew their numbers, but there was little joy in their knowledge. They had no rooting interest.

You could hardly blame the boys for their retreat; years of fallen heroes had murdered their faith. In a situation such as this one, there was only one person who might be able to shatter the boys' cynicism. Who ya gonna call? Who else? The faith healer, Stan Hansen.

Hansen fixed a long glare at Daniel, Andrew, and Jason. "Boys, you're gonna be coming with me for a while," he barked.

The children cowered, and looked to their father for help. Mr. Maskin, caught between how he'd explain the loss of the children to his wife and his own keen sense of self-preservation, looked to me for reassurance. "They'll be fine," I said, before whispering under my breath, "I hope."

The five of us followed Hansen to the dressing room. "Will we be going . . ." Daniel meekly started.

"Shut up, kid," Hansen piped. "Which of you is the stat man?" Hansen barked. Andrew barely raised his hand.

Again, I must point out that these were not bad children; simply, they had lost their ability to believe in their favorite wrestling stars. If their sporting heroes appeared in newsprint, it was usually to describe their contract squabbles or arrest records. Thus, the kids acquired a more reliable set of champions, ones that inhabit video games and cartoons, with names like Super Mario and Sonic. Athletes are good for their numbers, but little else.

Now, however, the only numbers that mattered were these: Stan Hansen was no longer the bum whose victory total dropped 37 percent as Daniel astutely pointed out—rather, he was 6'3", 322 of in-your-face pounds.

"So you've been tracking wins and losses," Hansen asked. "Did you know about this?"

Hansen removed his shirt to reveal a protruding bone between his ribs. "This, my boys, is a cracked rib," he said. "Every

(Continued on page 60)

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Actual questions

Which young WCW star is known as "The Natural"?
1) Steve Austin
2) Scotty the Body
3) Dustin Rhodes
4) Robert Redford

Who portrayed Thunderlips in the film *Rocky III*?
1) Hulk Hogan
2) Lou Albano
3) Jesse Ventura
4) Rick Martel

Which of the following wrestlers is "Ravishing"?
1) Ron Ritchie
2) Dusty Rhodes
3) Rick Steamboat
4) Rick Rude

True or False: Jesse Ventura was a member of the elite Navy Seals?
1) True
2) False

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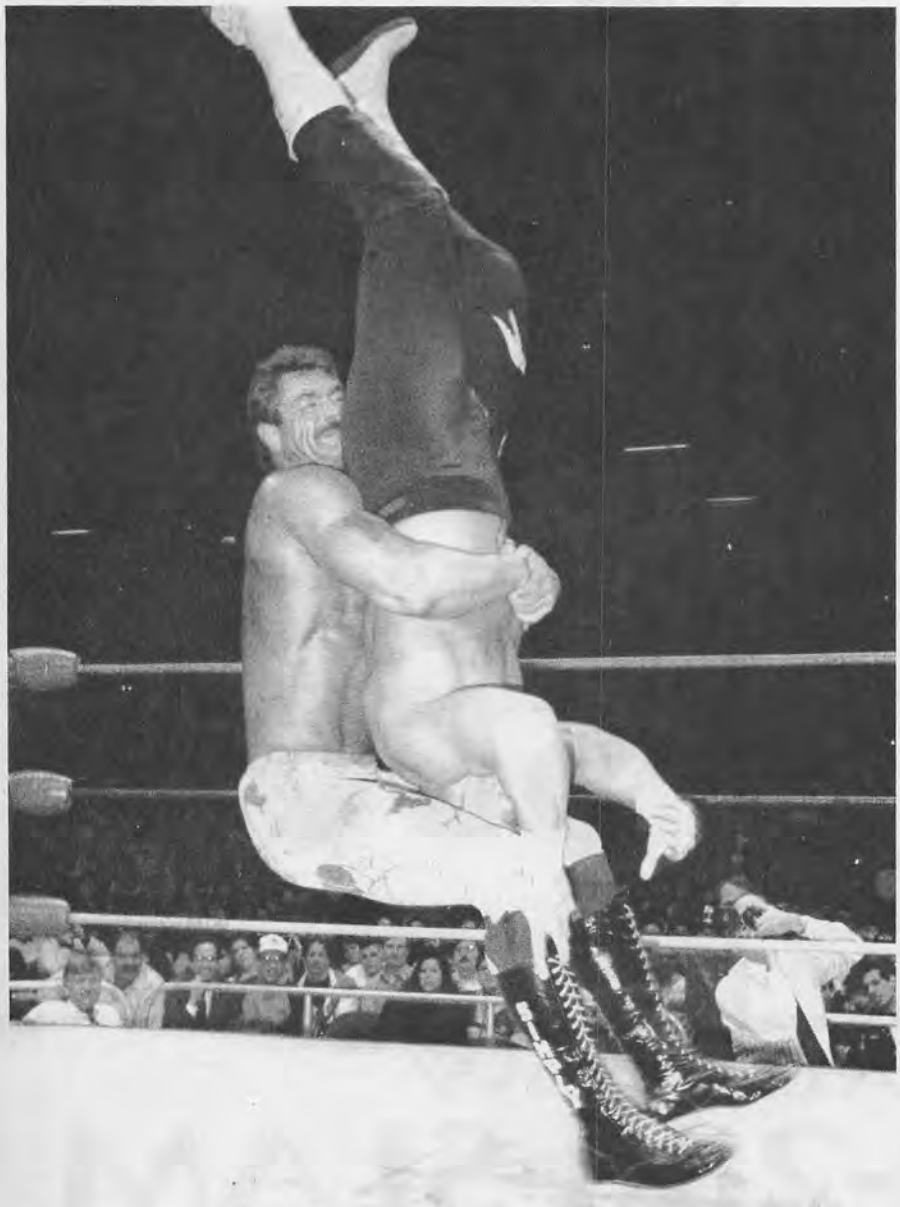
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ON ASSIGNMENT

BY LIZ HUNTER



Rick Rude was feeling powerful when he sat down for an interview with Liz Hunter, but three days later, a serious neck injury put him out of action.

THREE STRAIGHT TALKS with Rick Rude, Ron Simmons, and Jerry Lawler yielded juicy interviews for me, but for them disaster: Rude suffered an injury that might cost him his U.S. title, Simmons lost his World championship, and Lawler wound up in the WWF alongside Vince McMahon and Bobby Heenan.

"This year will be known as the Year of Living Rudely," Rude told me, just days before a herniated disk in his neck knocked him out of action indefinitely. "I feel pretty close to invincible in the ring. I'm just hitting my stride. It's unlike any feeling I've ever experienced, including you know what."

Rude spoke as if 1992 was an off-year. All he did was control the U.S. title after stealing it from Sting in spectacular fashion. But leave it to the "Ravishing One" to consider spending most of the year ranked number two a failure of extraordinary magnitude.

"I'm tired of two," he smiled. "Two is for losers. I'm ready to travel where no man has gone before—and take a few lucky ladies with me."

A week later, Rude suffered his injury, which at press time has caused Bill Watts to threaten to strip him of his title if he didn't defend it by January 23. For Rude, 1993 has thus far been the Year of the Skunk.

During our interview in an Atlanta restaurant, Ron Simmons didn't play with his food or rub his shoulder, significant departures for the popular (then) champion who gets very nervous when talking about himself. The first time I interviewed Simmons alone, I asked him about his shoulder injury before I learned to identify his ever-changing roster of nervous tics. But this Ron Simmons wasn't nervous anymore about his station as WCW World titlist.

"I've always believed strongly in my abilities," he said forcefully, "but there were times when I'd see pictures of myself wearing the

(Continued on page 58)

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JANUARY 1986
WRESTLER includes a dynamic four-page full-color section celebrating the 10 greatest wrestlers of the *Wrestler* years. Featured in color: Bruno Sammartino, Ric Flair, Hulk Hogan, and Dusty Rhodes. Also included are stories on: Ric Flair, Kerry Von Erich, and Tommy Rich.



APRIL 1988
WRESTLER examines "Wrestling's Greatest Day" with a four-page full-color section including all the action of Starrcade '87 and The Survivor Series, plus AWA and World Class spectaculars. Also included are stories on: Lex Luger, Tito Santana & Rick Martel, and The Midnight Rockers.





WINTER 1988
WRESTLER ANNUAL showcases SummerSlam '88 in a breathtaking four-page full-color section. Also included are stories on: Adrian Adonis and Bruiser Brody, Don Muraco, and a Q & A with Lex Luger.



AUGUST 1989
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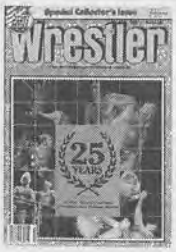


MARCH 1990
INSIDE WRESTLING looks back at the decade of the '80s with a dazzling eight-page full-color section and a year-by-year review. Also included are stories on: Bobby Heenan, Ric Flair, and Paul Orndorff.

DECEMBER 1990
WRESTLER brings you to SummerSlam '90 with four pages of full-color, including coverage of Hulk Hogan vs. Earthquake, The Ultimate Warrior vs. Rick Rude, and Kerry Von Erich vs. Curt Hennig. Also included are stories on: Stan Hansen, Arn Anderson, and The Ultimate Warrior.



OCTOBER 1991
WRESTLER was the 25th anniversary celebration of the longest continuously published wrestling magazine. Highlights include: 12 color pages of the greatest photos ever, a year-by-rear review of the hot *Wrestler* stories (1966-1991), and a ranking of the top 25 wrestlers of the past 25 years.



JANUARY 1993
INSIDE WRESTLING presents exclusive coverage of SummerSlam '92 and Clash of the Champions XX. Our staff photographers take you to London as Randy Savage battles The Ultimate Warrior and Bret Hart takes on Davey Boy Smith, and to Atlanta as WCW celebrates 20 years of wrestling on TBS.



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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers



GREG VALENTINE

The past year was an exciting one for the still-vital "Hammer," as he competed in the WWF and in WCW, where he captured the U.S. tag team title with Terry Taylor. More recently, the second-generation star has been wrestling in foreign countries. "I've returned from a tour of Africa," he reported. "I'm traveling more now than I have in years. I get to wrestle all different kinds of opponents, and I've always thrived on that."



MR. HUGHES

This rugged former football star heartened many fans by forming a tag team with popular Junkyard Dog, but not long after became Jeff Gaylord's tag team partner in the vicious Howard Hughes Connection in the USWA. Today, the 380-pound Hughes is hitting the gym harder than ever while deciding which federation he'll compete for. "I'm bigger, leaner, and meaner than ever," said the "Big Cat." "Next time out, I want to win a title."



LEATHERFACE

This fright-masked goon terrorized the USWA with his chainsaw throughout 1991, and now he's back—and Japanese fans are wishing he'd go away. The 6'9" madman is now competing for WING, and he's already carved up several rings and tables. As usual, Leatherface is conducting his sadism silently, and outraged WING officials are considering banning him. "It may be our only solution," said one official.



VIVACIOUS VERONICA

Fans assumed this beautiful manager had retired after being brutalized by The Sandman and Johnny Hot Body at an ECW card in June, but instead the former leader of Steve Austin decided to add to her talents by going after a degree. "I'm going after my master's degree in business," she said. "I'm learning every loophole in the law—and from now on, when I sign a wrestler to a contract, they'll stay signed!"

INSIDE WRESTLING

201

CAPSULE PROFILE

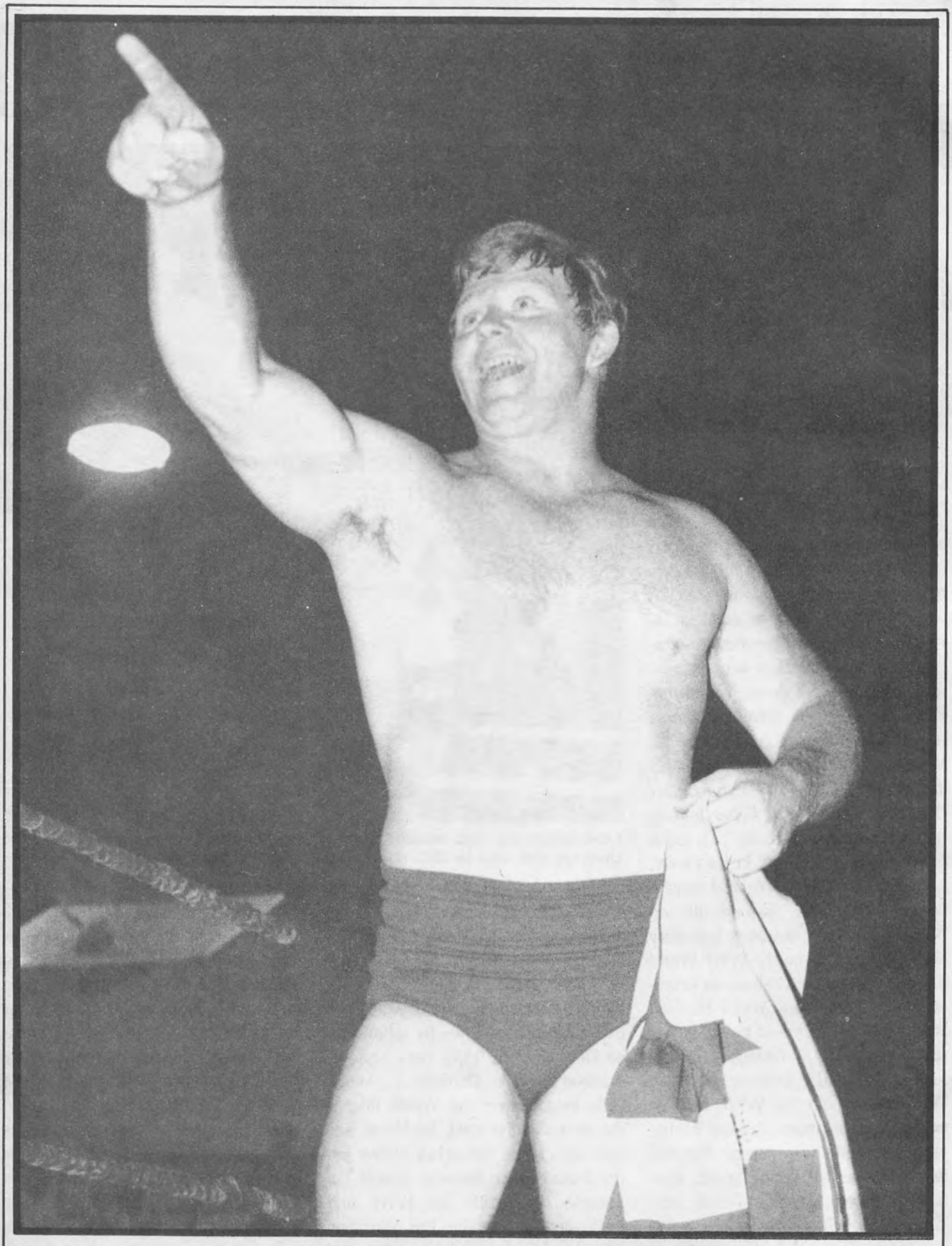
BOB BACKLUND



"All-American Boy" Bob Backlund put together an incredible 5½-year reign as WWF World champion from 1978 to 1983. He has returned with his sights set on another title.

THIS FORMER WWF World champion remains one of the most purely scientific wrestlers in the sport *("Those kind of wrestlers are hard to find anymore")* ... A former NCAA wrestling champion as an amateur ... Favorite finishers are the atomic spine-crusher and the chicken wing submission hold, although during his current WWF comeback he seems to favor a sunset flip/neck bridge combination ... Made his pro debut in 1973 after being trained by Eddie Sharkey, and later Dory and Terry Funk *("Better training no young star could ask for")* ... Competed in the AWA early in his career, as well as in several regional federations ... Won the Missouri title on April 23, 1976, by defeating legendary Harley Race ... Won the WWF World title from Superstar Graham on February 20, 1978, in New York's Madison Square Garden *("One of the great title upsets in WWF history; Graham seemed unbeatable in those days")* ... Went on to hold the WWF belt for nearly six more years ... Most memorable title feuds were against Pat Patterson, "Superfly" Jimmy Snuka, Graham, and Greg Valentine *("One time, Graham literally destroyed the belt!")* ... Late in his title reign, Backlund began touting cardiovascular conditioning as opposed to weight training ... Lost some bulk, but gained a great deal of stamina ... Became a master of the Harvard step test *("Nobody has ever come as close to lasting as long on those steps")* ... Shock waves resounded through the sport when The Iron Sheik defeated him by submission on December 26, 1983, once again at Madison Square Garden ... When Hulk Hogan won the World title at the next Garden card, Backlund was shut out of title rematches *("They just don't match fan favorites against fan favorites")* ... Left the WWF and made appearances for Pro Wrestling USA, but left the sport soon afterward ... Spent most of the next seven years in semi-retirement, but began to make regular appearances on independent cards in 1991, defeating Ivan Koloff and Terry Funk *("It's hard to keep this sport out of your blood")* ... When he defeated Paul Orndorff at a Wrestling Indepedent Network card early in 1992, fans saw that he was as competitive as ever ... Shocked the sport by announcing his return to the WWF—a federation he had been a vocal critic of—just a few months ago ... Has already scored wins over Skinner, Rick Martel, Papa Shango, and Shawn Michaels *("Good competition helps keep a wrestler sharp")* ... Already has regained status as a viable contender for both the World and Intercontinental championships. □

CAPSULE PROFILE PINUP



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ASHEBORO, NC
By Jimmy Nance



RONNIE GARVIN
vs.
TOMMY RICH



This contest was especially anticipated because both men are former NWA World champions. Soon after the bout began, Garvin began working on "Wildfire" Rich's left leg. After Rich gained the advantage, the bout continued evenly for the next several minutes. For both men, brawling became more important than pure wrestling. Rich tried to pin "Hands of Stone" by using the ropes for leverage, but Ronnie rolled Rich into a small package to get the pin himself.

OTHER BOUTS: The Ringlords defeated David Isley & Dale Porter . . . Sam Houston beat Colt Steel . . . Asheboro Assassin beat Splasher.

PHOENIX, AZ
By Don Landers



THE UNDERTAKER
vs.
RAZOR RAMON



Ramon looked incredibly confident and arrogant going into this match. But when Ramon tried to floor Undertaker with shoulderblocks, the ghoulish fan favorite battled back strong, pounding Ramon with devastating blows to the back and midsection. After a Ramon rally, Undertaker grabbed the advantage and never relinquished it, gaining the pinfall victory and moving himself up the ladder of contention.

OTHER BOUTS: Max Moon pinned Repo Man . . . The Headshrinkers beat The Natural Disasters . . . Bob Backlund pinned Papa Shango . . . Intercontinental champion Shawn Michaels pinned Marty Jannetty . . . The Nasty Boys defeated World tag team champions Money Inc. . . . World champion Bret Hart pinned Ric Flair.

WAYNE, NJ
By Tommy Fierro



TERRY FUNK
vs.
EDDIE GILBERT



This Texas death match was a bloodbath. After Gilbert piledrived Funk on a table outside the ring, he grabbed a chair to pile on more punishment. Funk came back, though, and bodyslammed Gilbert in the bleachers. Soon, both men were down and groggy. Funk won when he got to his feet right before the referee concluded his 10-count.

OTHER BOUTS: Jimmy Shoulders pinned Kodiak Bear . . . Ed the Razor pinned Gus the Greek Terror . . . Damian Stone defeated Tommy Cairo . . . Chris Candido beat Sabu by disqualification . . . Ray Odyssey defeated The Mauler . . . The Cheetah Kid, Al the Sledgehammer, & The Spider beat The Tank, Chris Evans, & Boy Gone Bad.

WRESTLING CAPITALS

AUBURN HILLS, MI
By Pete Ponzetti



NAILZ
vs.
BIG BOSSMAN



Nailz jumped Bossman soon after he entered the cage, lacing into him with kicks and punches. When Nailz began climbing the cage, Bossman grabbed him by the leg and pulled him down. Bossman threw Nailz into the turnbuckle twice, then gave him a big splash. Nailz was halfway out the cage when Bossman pulled him back in. Bossman seemed to be en route to victory after whipping Nailz with his leather belt, but Nailz walloped him with his nightstick and scored the pin.

OTHER BOUTS: Max Moon pinned Terry Taylor . . . World tag team champions Money Inc. beat The Natural Disasters . . . Lance Cassidy pinned Skinner . . . Razor Ramon beat Randy Savage by countout . . . High Energy defeated Barry Horowitz & Tom Stone . . . Bob Backlund beat Intercontinental champion Shawn Michaels by countout.

LOUISVILLE, KY
By Sean Underhill



BARRY WINDHAM
vs.
DUSTIN RHODES



These two former friends absolutely could not wait to get after each other. They walloped each other with both brawling and scientific maneuvers. Windham was disdainful of referee Randy Anderson, but so was Rhodes, who usually has a great deal of respect for the officials. Finally, both men became fed up and shoved Anderson. The ref quickly disqualified them both.

OTHER BOUTS: Barry Windham & Brian Pillman beat Brad Armstrong & Marcus Bagwell . . . World tag team champions Rick Steamboat & Shane Douglas defeated Rick Rude & Big Van Vader . . . Erik Watts beat Bobby Eaton by submission . . . Dustin Rhodes defeated Dan Spivey . . . Marcus Bagwell beat Tony Atlas.

CHARLESTON, SC
By Tom Davis



VAN HAMMER
vs.
TONY ATLAS

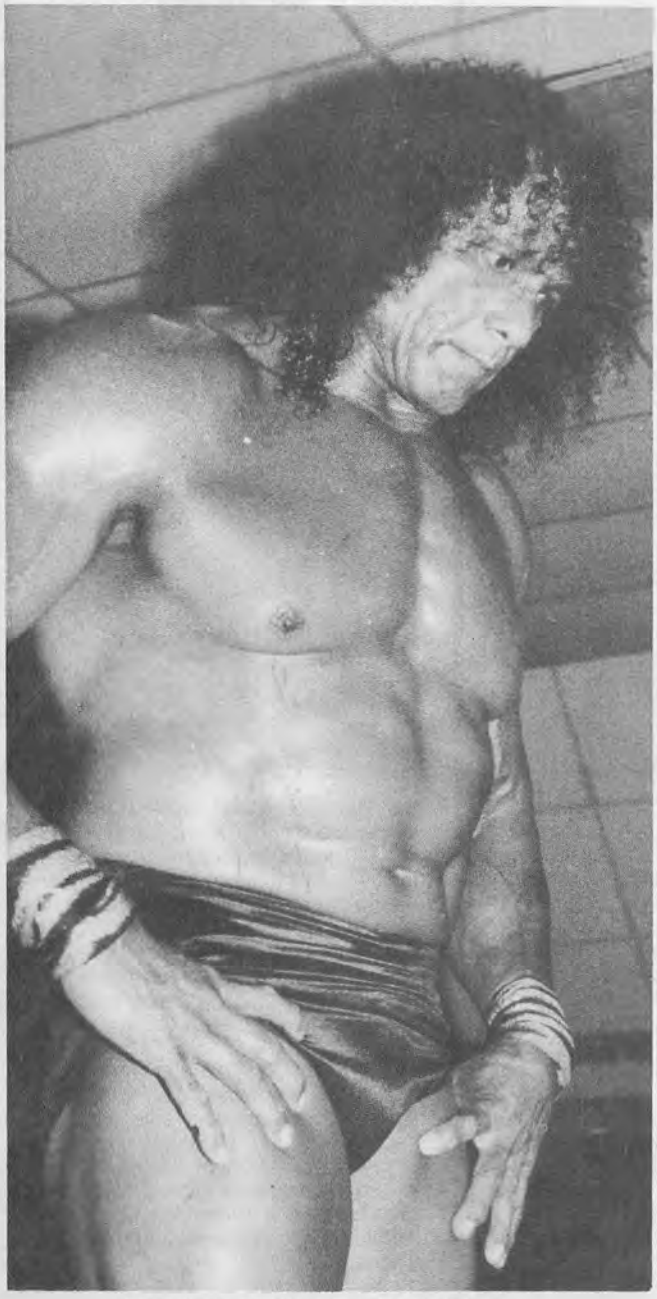


The "Hammerheads" were out in full force at the Citadel to watch their man take on the always-dangerous Atlas. The two outstanding power wrestlers traded blows manfully, with neither gaining a clear advantage. After Atlas scored a two-count, Hammer got to his feet and began a great comeback: He lifted his 300-pound opponent, executed a slingshot-suplex, and got the three-count.

OTHER BOUTS: Shanghai Pierce defeated Brad Armstrong . . . Erik Watts defeated U.S. champion Rick Rude in a non-title, 15-minute challenge match . . . Barry Windham battled Dustin Rhodes to a double-disqualification . . . Big Van Vader beat Rick Steamboat . . . World champion Ron Simmons defeated The Barbarian. □



Matt Brock's PLAIN SPEAKING



"SUPERFLY" JIMMY SNUKA

ATLANTA, GA: Going to a championship wrestling match and seeing a double-countout is like going to a hockey game and seeing a tie. I don't go to hockey games, haven't been to one in over 50 years, just before the old New York Americans were kicked out of Madison Square Garden. It's too bad Starrcade '92 had to happen. There was nothing exciting or controversial about the Lethal Lottery tag team matches, the Great Muta-Masa Chono match wasn't worthy of the anticipation, and, worst of all, Ron Simmons and Steve Williams went to a double-countout in the WCW World title match before referee Nick Patrick somehow reversed the decision and gave it to Simmons by disqualification. As if it really mattered. In either case, Simmons keeps the belt. I'm not exactly sure why Starrcade lacked the intensity one would expect from a card that put so much on the line, but I have a pretty good idea: Too many wrestlers wrestled too many times, therefore they all had to spread their energy a little too thin. Sting was wrestling in his third match when Battlebowl came around, and it was understandable that he was eliminated early. His King of Cable match against Big Van Vader was okay, but Vader was allowed to control the pace, which meant a slow match. WCW should think a little harder about its formats for big cards. Compare the feeling in The Omni after The Great Muta won Battlebowl to the feeling in Richfield Coliseum after Bret Hart defended his WWF World title at Survivor Series. There was just no comparison. Never thought I'd say this: The WWF won the holiday cards by a landslide.

MORRISVILLE, PA: On the day after Christmas, Davey Boy Smith wrestled Jimmy Snuka at an Eastern Championship Wrestling card here, and I ended up feeling sorry for Snuka. Here's the perfect example of a man who can't do much else but wrestle because it's all he ever knew and was trained to do. Snuka is well past his prime—the before and after line in his life came in the

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

cage match at Madison Square Garden when he missed that spectacular dive against Bob Backlund—so now he's just trying to make a living in the ring. Unfortunately, his careless style is more suited for wrestlers who don't plan on making a life out of the sport. He is a risk-taker, fearless and courageous, though his slightly aged body doesn't respond the way it used to. "I love being in the ring," Snuka told me. "It is like home to me. Most wrestlers do not feel the same way." But most wrestlers don't feel the need to stoop to the tactics Snuka has lately. Wonder what's *really* on his twisted mind these days?



BOB BACKLUND VS. RICK MARTEL

NEW YORK: Bob Backlund is going to be WWF World champion again. You heard it here first. Count ol' Matt Brock among the most cynical when Backlund first returned to the WWF—it seemed like a desperate career-saver move—but from an objective eye, it's hard to doubt that this guy is a perfectly legitimate contender. He's in shape, he has the skills, and he definitely has the drive. Backlund feels he was sold short the last time around in the WWF and now he wants the whole world to know he can prosper in the post-Hulk Hogan era, where muscle and style aren't everything. Backlund must have felt heartened when Bret Hart won the WWF World title because it proved science can make it in the federation. What's different about Backlund now is that he's a little more willing to play the WWF's game. He bounces around the ring, puts on a little bit of that gee-golly act, and makes his bosses happy. But all along he's working his way up the WWF ladder, just like he did a decade ago, measuring his opponents, setting timetables, and constantly working on improving himself. He is, of course, the classic old-time wrestler with old-time skills and a no-nonsense approach that's sorely missing from the sport these days. If you have any doubts about what I'm saying, just take a hard look into Backlund's eyes. There's a lot of desire in there—enough to get it done once again.

MEMPHIS, TN: Decided to stop by the train tracks and get me a plate of soul food at Button's Soul Food Kitchen. Fried okra, fried chicken, candied yams, sweet potatoes, gravy on everything—to hell with cholesterol, I'm goin' for it! But my good vibe was spoiled when I started talking to the fans about Jerry Lawler. "I don't know about that man anymore," said Angelina "Moms" Johnson, a regular at this fine diner. "I mean, he still says he loves the Tennessee fans, but then he gets on the WWF and calls everybody peasants. It's like he's talking out of two sides of his mouth at once." What's actually going on is that Lawler is getting back at the WWF in the only way he knows how: He's using his wits. For years, he had to put up with the WWF never acknowledging his (and the USWA's) existence. He had to put up with being considered a "regional" champion in an "independent" federation. And those comments hurt him to the core. Now, he's standing right next to his most vocal critics, and you can rest assured that he's going to get revenge for 20 years of Memphis-bashing. It's not that he hates the WWF fans, it's just that he hates the organization they support. My advice to "The King": beat people. Beat Ric Flair—again. Beat Randy Savage—again. And then beat Bret Hart. Show the world that you're still one of the greatest wrestlers in the world. But until you do that, better mind your manners, because one of those guys will be all too happy to smack that crown right off your head. □

In a matter of months, several of the game's biggest stars have changed their attitudes, their styles, and their partners. It's all had a tremendous upheaval effect on wrestling. These are the men who make the sport so intriguing—and so hard to keep up with. These are the men who bear . . .

THE CHA OF

By Dave Rosenbaum

CURT HENNIG accepted Randy Savage's invitation to join him at The Survivor Series, shocking Ric Flair and Bobby Heenan and turning overnight from ruthless rulebreaking manager to do-gooding fan favorite.

Kamala, the feared Ugandan giant, started bickering with his handler, Kim Chee, and actually drew sympathy from those fans who could see his fear in wrestling The Undertaker.

Barry Windham, a good guy one day and a bad guy the next, ruthlessly lashed out at Dustin Rhodes, who refused to pin a prone and injured Rick Steamboat at Clash of the Champions XXI. Now one of the most hated men in WCW, Windham is at war with his former partner.

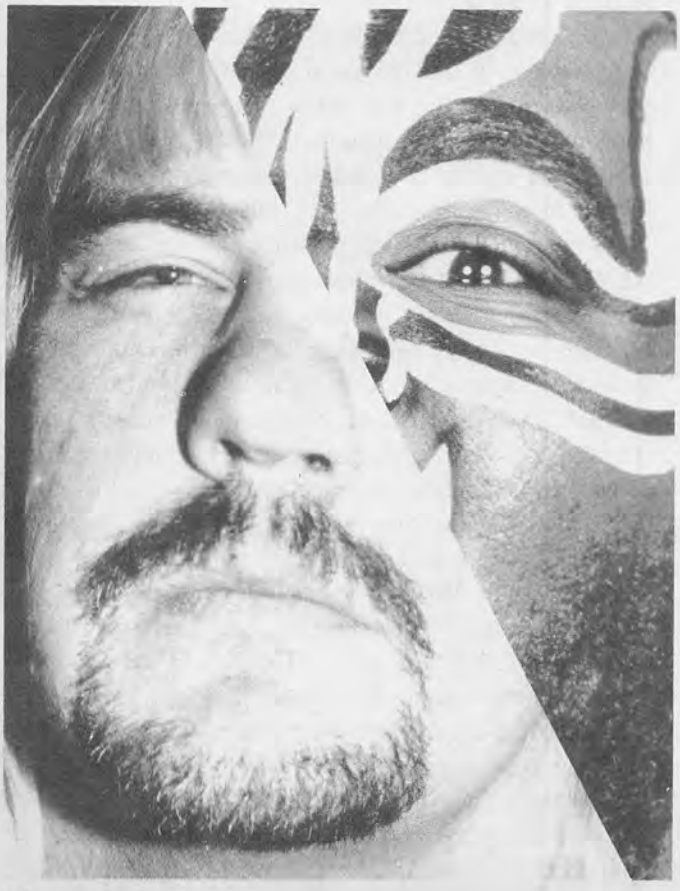
At Clash of the Champions XX, Brian Pillman attacked his now-former friend, Brad Armstrong.

Viewers of WWF telecasts are shocked to hear Jerry Lawler referring to the fans as "peasants" and World champion Bret Hart as a "paper champion."

What in the world has come over the wrestling world, where minds are changing faster than a 16-year-old prom queen looking for that perfect dress?

Taken individually, there's nothing unusual about these changes in attitude. They happen all the time in the emotional world of pro wrestling.

What's unusual is that they're all happening at the same time—and on a tremendous scale—thus resulting in a com-





NGING FACES WRESTLING

plete overhaul of the overall wrestling picture.

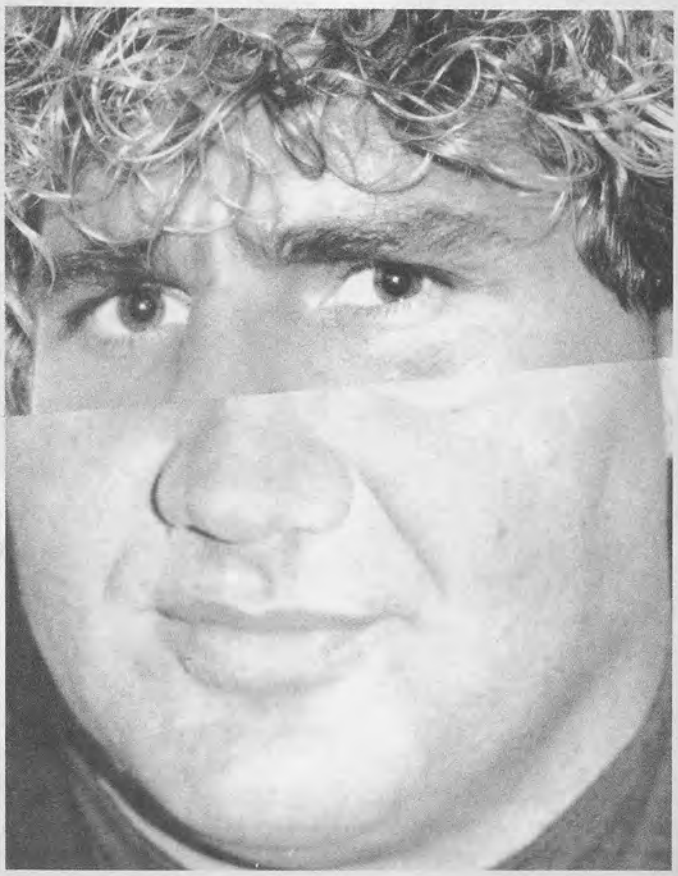
It's all having a tremendous effect on the way people view the game. It's also having a tremendous effect on the game itself.

Windham and Rhodes, once NWA and WCW World tag team champs, no longer have the belts and have split. In a strange turn, Rhodes is siding with the new champs, Shane Douglas and Rick Steamboat, who are busy protecting the belts from Pillman and Windham.

Kamala's inability to communicate by traditional means makes it nearly impossible to interpret his situation, but he appears to be transforming into a gentle giant. Of course, Kamala is unable to function without assistance; who will handle Kamala if he breaks with Kim Chee? Amazingly, Slick—a former manager of rule-breakers—could be the man who holds the answer to that question.

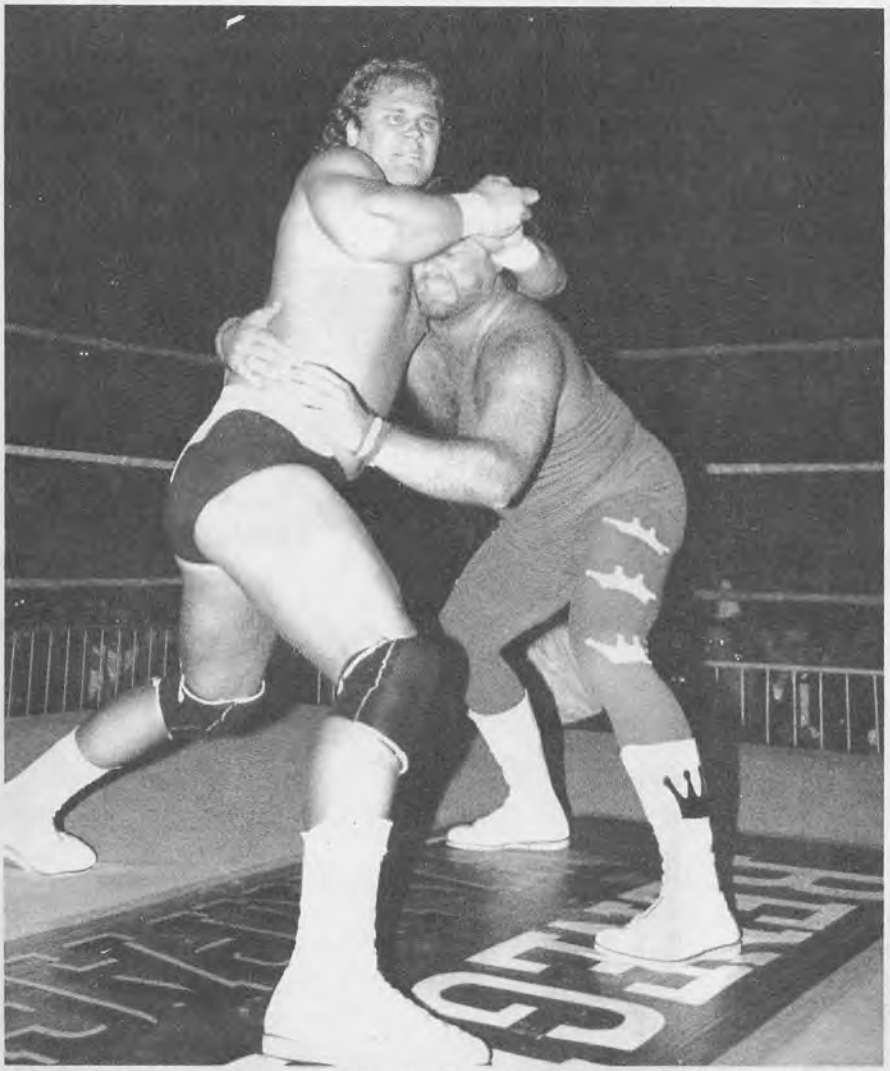
Hennig's turn really shook things up. Flair







Brian Pillman won two WCW light heavyweight titles as a fan favorite. He has yet to win any titles as a rulebreaker, but his skills have not suffered from the transition.



Curt Hennig has competed as a rulebreaker for most of his career, while Jerry Lawler has been a fan favorite. Are the changes permanent, or are these their true colors?

Razor Ramon, and Heenan thought they could depend on Mr. Perfect. Well, nobody's perfect, and although Hennig seems intent on battling his former friends, it should be pointed out that Hennig has spent most of his career as a rulebreaker.

The change is most likely temporary. But how does that impact on Savage, who has befriended Hennig and given him his trust? The future of the WWF hangs in the balance.

Lawler's situation is positively fascinating for several reasons. First of all, he's commentating in the WWF while still wrestling in the USWA. Up until a few months ago, that arrangement was an impossibility.

Meanwhile, Lawler once again is having no trouble pulling off a simply spectacular day-to-day personality change; an arrogant bad man in the WWF, Lawler reverts to hometown hero in the USWA.

"Memphis seems to bring out a different side of Jerry," said Jeff Jarrett. "But I see what's been going on in the WWF and I don't like it. I try to talk to Jerry about it, but he just seems to shrug it off."

As Lawler struggles to endure rulebreaker-like attacks by Koko B. Ware in the USWA, he actually encourages similar attacks by WWF rulebreakers.

"Jerry's a pretty intricate man," Jarrett finally decided. "Anybody who can figure him out is two steps ahead of me."

Almost all of the changes seem temporary. Hennig is a born rulebreaker; Kamala is, too. Pillman once lived for the fans' cheers; he's sure to find his way. And we have the utmost confidence in Lawler, who sometimes goes wayward but always gets back on the path.

The biggest questions concern Windham, whose father, Blackjack Mulligan, also went through

several odd personality changes.

"The difference is that I always had the same *attitude* all along," Mulligan said. "I didn't care who was my partner, I just wanted to kick some butt. I've told Barry this a million times: You have to watch out for yourself in wrestling. When he saw Rhodes not pin Steamboat, Barry realized Rhodes wasn't looking out for the good of the team, so Barry just worried about himself. Seems like the right attitude, don't it?"

Forget the Mulliganese. In plain English, Windham's next change of heart could come tomorrow, especially if Pillman does him wrong.

"I've never declared allegiance to any one partner," Windham said. "Brian knows what I'm about, and I think I know what he's about. We can be a great team, just like me and Rhodes could've been a great team. It's all a matter of chemistry."

Chemistry? Well, wrestling's chemistry is all out of whack.

The Undertaker, who gets his kicks by burying opponents in a coffin, is a fan favorite.

Doink, a clown who gets his jollies through teasing fans, is a rulebreaker.

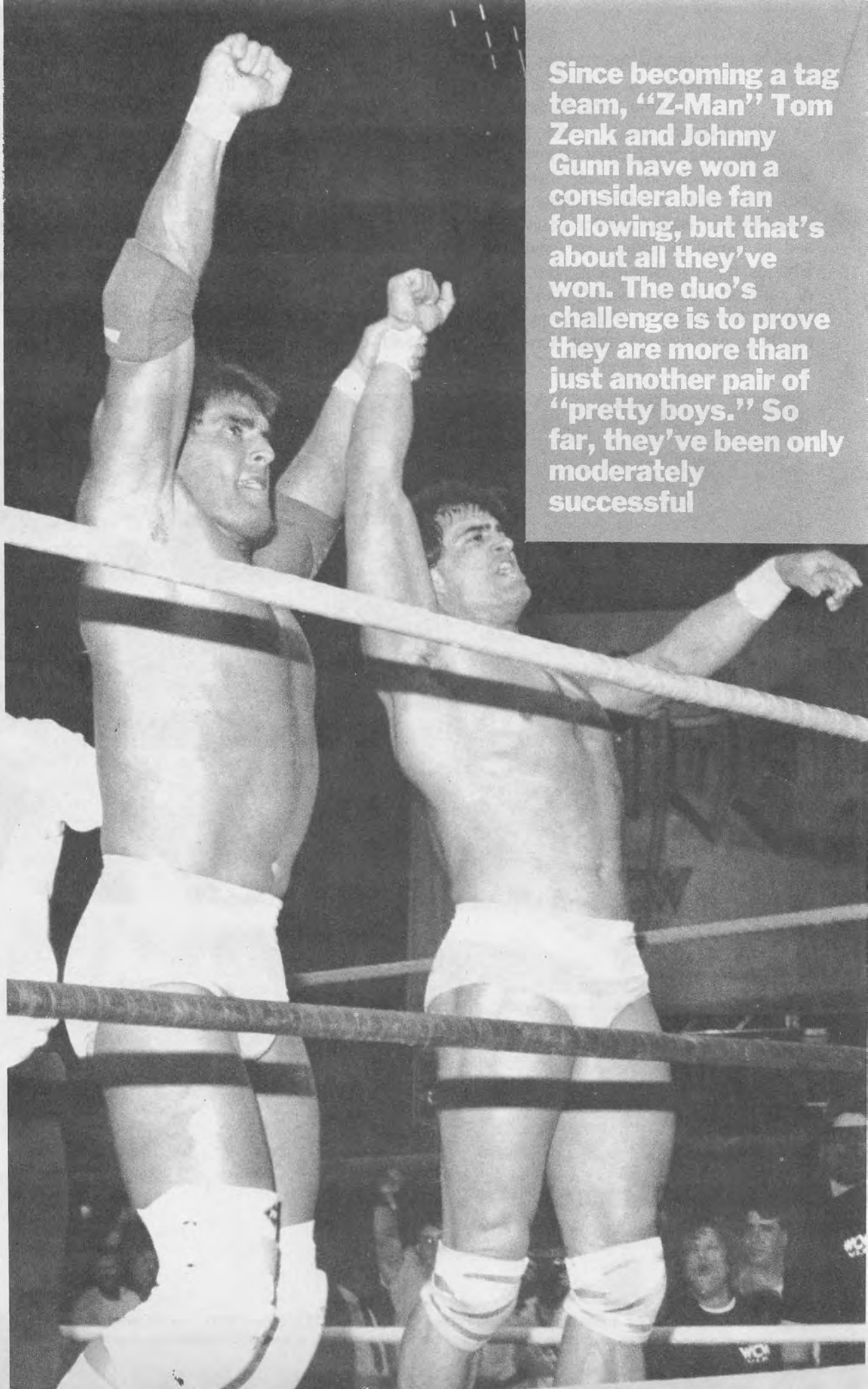
There's a rule in wrestling; expect anything, be surprised by nothing.

Even being a fan has its price. □



As a rulebreaker, Kamala battled The Undertaker throughout 1992. The "Ugandan Giant" may be on the verge of becoming a fan favorite, a switch Undertaker made last year.

Z-MAN & JOHNNY GUNN



Since becoming a tag team, "Z-Man" Tom Zenk and Johnny Gunn have won a considerable fan following, but that's about all they've won. The duo's challenge is to prove they are more than just another pair of "pretty boys." So far, they've been only moderately successful

GOOD, OR JUST GOOD-LOOKING?

By Andy Rodriguez

TOM ZENK AND Johnny Gunn's greatest enemy may not be any other tag team in WCW. It may be the mirror.

For them, a look into the mirror will reveal what is obvious: They are two handsome men, a reality that has helped them win over a lot of fans.

Neither man will apologize for that.

"Hey, I can't change my looks; in fact, I'm proud of my appearance," Zenk related. "People notice you more, so in that respect it's a plus. I don't try to sell myself short."

"I agree with Tom wholeheartedly," Gunn said. "If people want to recognize us for our appearances, that's cool."

Often, if a wrestler or tag team becomes known for their facial appearance, their opponents tend to regard them lightly. To an extent, that has happened with Zenk and Gunn.

The problem is, they have not yet capitalized on it.

The team of Zenk and Gunn can boast of victories over the likes of Shanghai Pierce and Tex Slazenger. Their trouble lies in not being able to beat teams like Cactus Jack and The Barbarian.

"The way I see it, they're too nice," Jack said. "What they ought to do is work themselves into a real frenzy and hit the ring like animals. Course, that would ruin their little images, wouldn't it? Yeah, too bad."

Neither Zenk nor Gunn believe they need to toughen themselves up in any way. They do acknowledge that they need to work on certain aspects of their game, but insist that the need to improve applies to every other team.

"Even for the most successful teams, there's always room for improvement," Gunn said. "We don't have to feel bad or anything because we need to do some work on our strategy. I think we're definitely getting a bad rap."

Rick Steamboat, for one, agrees that Zenk and Gunn should not be judged so harshly.



Tom Zenk often looks good against mid-level competition. But can he and Johnny Gunn win the WCW World tag team title?

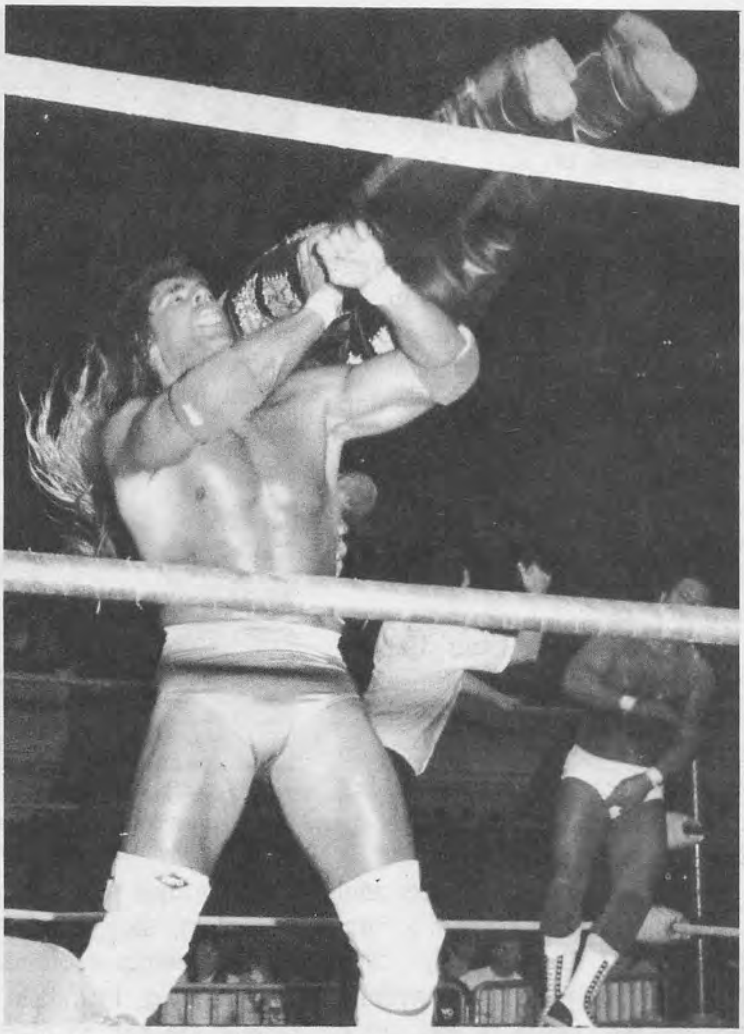
"Tom and Johnny are excellent wrestlers; there's no doubt about that," Steamboat offered. "They're not lacking for skills or smarts. There are just so many good tag teams in WCW right now that it's tough for Zenk and Gunn to make their mark."

That is true. The tag competition is intense. Steamboat and Shane Douglas hold the World belts. Their contenders include Arn Anderson and Bobby Eaton, Cactus Jack and The Barbarian, Pierce and Slazenger, and The Vegas Connection.

"There's no doubt about it," said Zenk. "There are a lot of teams to go through before we get title shots. The problem isn't facing Steamboat and Douglas, because we know they'd give us a chance. The problem is getting into a position to face them."



Gunn has shown that he has some talent but has yet to display it against tough veterans like Arn Anderson. Until Gunn and Zenk win big, they will be just two more pretty boys.

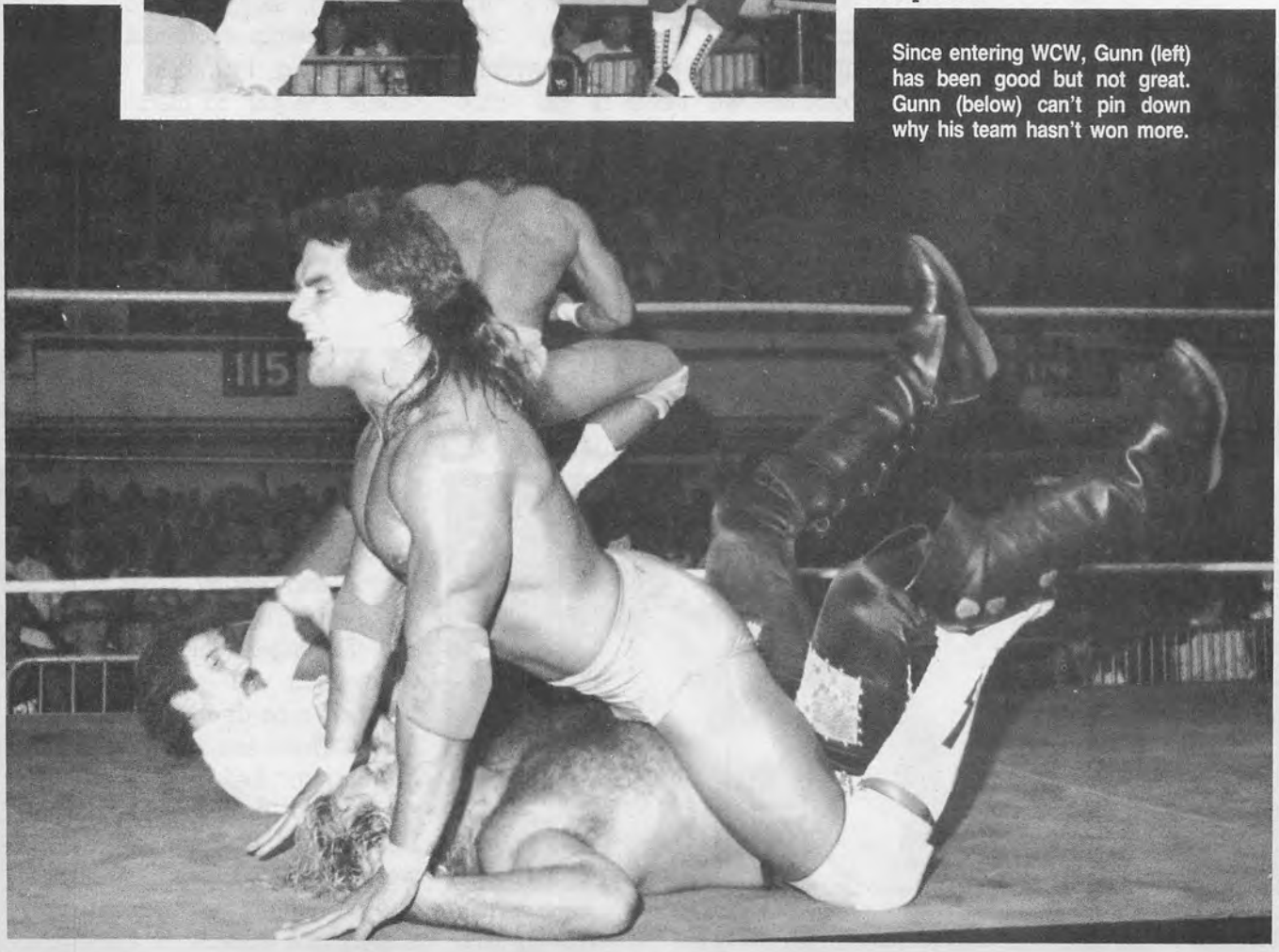


What surprises a lot of observers is that the fact that Zenk's veteran experience has not moved him and Gunn closer to the top.

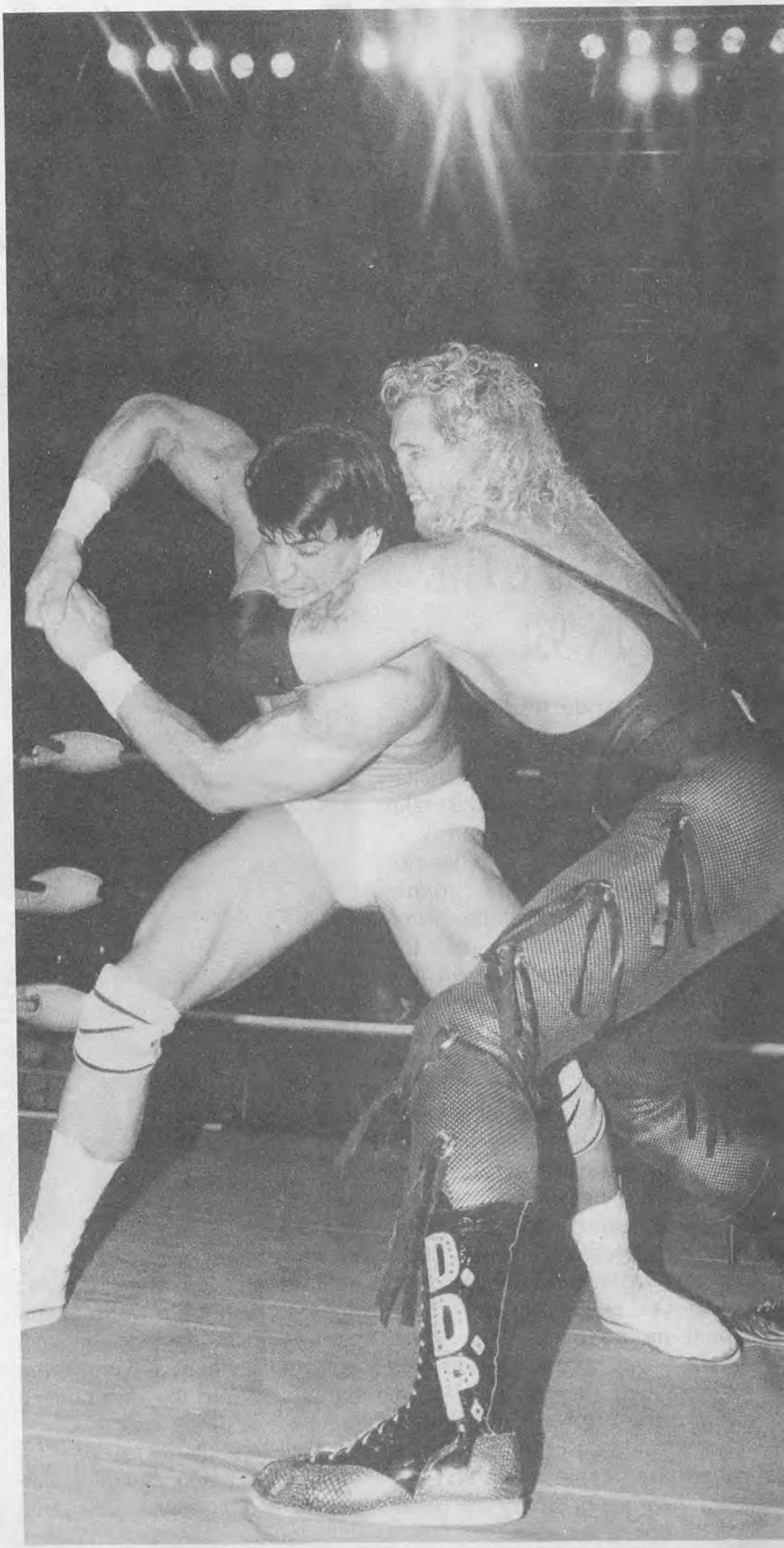
"Zenk doesn't have as much pull as you might expect him to have," said a source in the WCW championship committee. "He's had a fair amount of success in WCW, but he isn't very forceful in pursuing his agenda."

Gunn scoffs at the suggestion that Zenk has somehow been derelict in his duties.

"That's ridiculous, really dumb," the Philadelphia native said. "Tom has been nothing but a boost to my career. He's taught me a tremendous amount of new holds and maneuvers—and he's also shown me a new way of looking at things in the ring. I don't feel that I've been held back in any way. It's the complete opposite. Tom has done everything he can to help me."



Since entering WCW, Gunn (left) has been good but not great. Gunn (below) can't pin down why his team hasn't won more.



Zenk shows "Diamond" Dallas Page that he is more than just a pretty face. But he needs to prove it to a tougher opponent.

So, then, what is the solution to Zenk and Gunn's woes?

"Keep plugging away, keep working hard, stay focused on our goals," Zenk offered. "That's all we can ask of ourselves, and it's all anyone should expect from us. Johnny and I have something great going here. I truly believe this could be the greatest tag team I've ever been involved in—and I've been in some great ones."

"I'm really excited about our prospects," Gunn added. "To find a partner like Zenk almost as soon as I arrived in WCW was an amazing break. In that respect, I've been very fortunate."

Still, the tag of "pretty boy" remains.

"Hey, that's something to which I'm very accustomed," Zenk sighed. "Since my first day in the sport, there have been people who've said things like, 'You're too good-looking to be good,' or 'All he cares about is making sure his face doesn't get scuffed up.' I can handle it, and Johnny also has no problem with it. I guarantee you we'll be all right."

WCW may be in for some of the blame here. In a video taped shortly after they teamed, Zenk and Gunn were made to look like two men who cared mainly about fine clothes and beautiful women. Not exactly the proper image for a team that wants to be taken seriously for its wrestling abilities.

A team can be good-looking *and* good. The Rockers proved that, and so have others. Zenk and Gunn aren't the first to face the predicament.

Joked one WCW wrestler: "Maybe they should throw away their mirrors until they get a title shot."

For a team looking for answers, that's something on which to reflect. □

NEW BLOOD!

THE WRESTLERS WHO COULD REVITALIZE THE WWF IN '93!

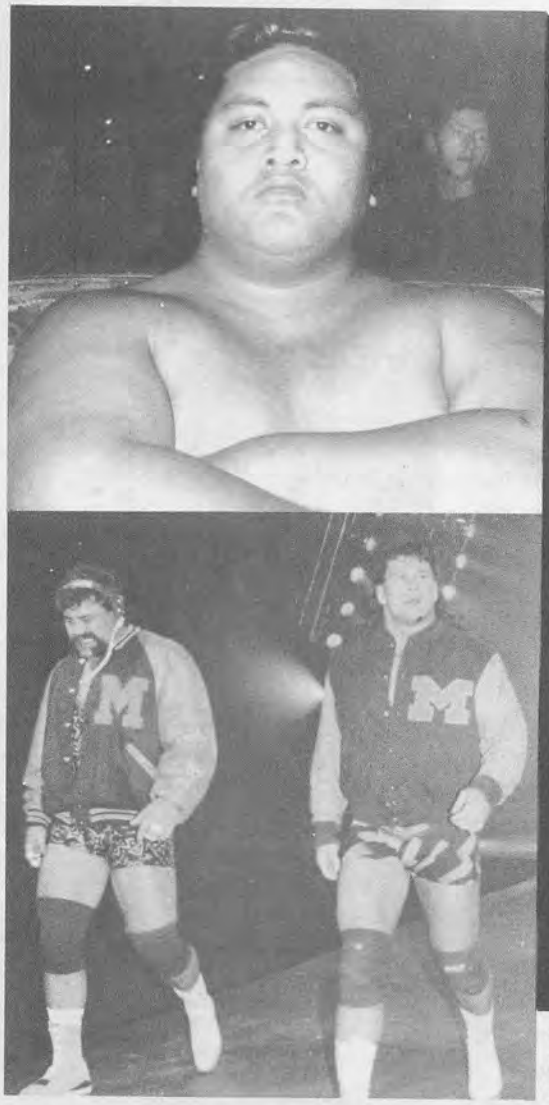
By Andy Rodriguez

YOKOZUNA IS FURIOUS. If there is a WWF wrestler reading this, he should take that sentence very seriously.

The sumo warrior ("yokozuna" means grand champion) is one of the wrestlers who could make 1993 the most memorable year in the WWF in a long, long time.

The 505-pound wrestler, accompanied to the ring by Mr. Fuji, is increasingly becoming a menace. He treats opponents like fishheads. His mighty splashes hurt like a splash has never hurt before.

"He's a tough one, all right," said H. Hosaka, *Inside Wrestling's* Japanese correspondent, who has seen Yokozuna compete as a sumo. "The WWF has never seen anyone like him. When I heard he was going to the WWF, I knew a lot of guys would be in trouble. I hear there are people who aren't taking him seriously. They better start doing so soon, or they'll be in danger."





WWF-bound are (clockwise from left) the Steiners, Yokozuna, El Gigante, and Lex Luger.

Thwarted for years in his quest to manage a world champion, Fuji is ready to unleash Yokozuna upon anyone who dares step into the ring against him.

"Fuji has plenty of pent-up anger over being denied a winner," said former managerial colleague Johnny Valiant. "He's always had the men for the job, but there were a variety of bad breaks. Also, there's been some question about his ability as a manager. With Yokozuna, he has the chance to silence all those critics. It would really be something sweet."

Not to be overlooked is the sumo warrior's considerable

A host of new wrestlers are promising to jumpstart a moribund WWF. These men are big, bad, and determined to dominate. The federation's established stars better beware of these awe-inspiring newcomers, or they'll be in very serious trouble



skills in traditional wrestling. He can grapple and brawl in the more traditional way—and he possesses a surprising amount of agility for a man of his size.

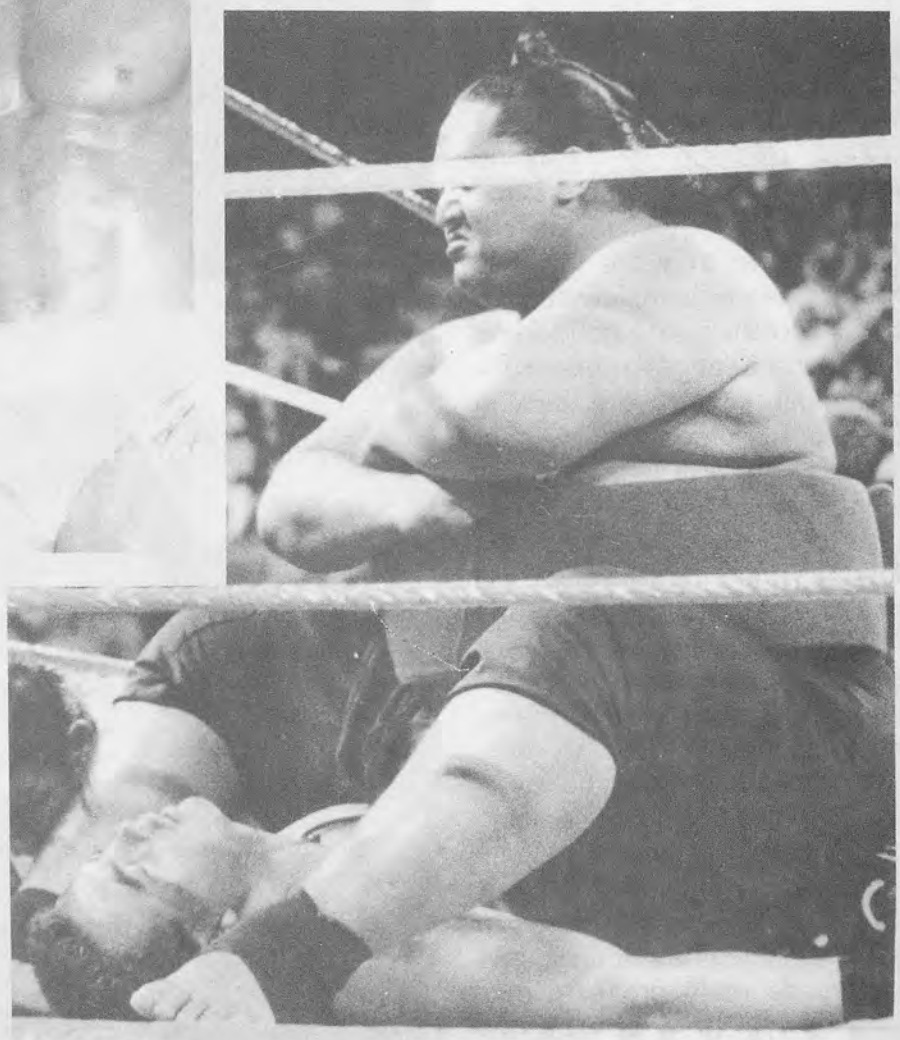
Prediction: Yokozuna will contend in a big way for the World title in 1993. For a man of his size, there isn't any other way to go.

Of course, 'Zuna is not the only recently arrived athlete worth noticing.

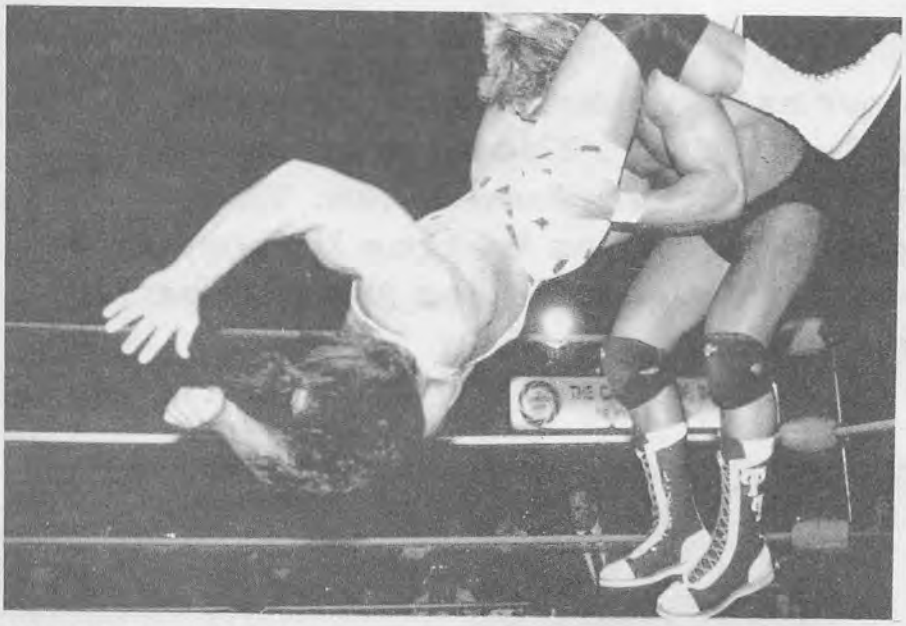
THE STEINER BROTHERS

On December 14, 1992, the tag team scene in the WWF changed dramatically. That is the day Rick and Scott Steiner made their WWF debut.

Rick and Scott gave the fans in Green Bay, Wisconsin, their first view of what WCW fans



Yokozuna presents a weighty problem for opponents, but his girth is just one of his weapons. He can grapple with the best and has surprising agility for a big man.



Most WWF competitors have not seen maneuvers like Scott Steiner's "Frankensteiner" (above). The Steiners have jumped to the WWF and should make an immediate impact.

had seen for years. The brothers made quick work of their overmatched foes—and put every tag duo in their new home a clear message: *We're here, and we intend to clean up!*

That clean-up is beginning with another set of brothers: the Beverlys. The Steiners are eager to prove they are the only brother team worth watching. Beau and Blake are good—and they have a lot of experience—but most experts are picking Rick and Scott to win this one.

Naturally, for a team that has won three NWA/WCW World tag team titles, a successful feud against the Beverlys will not be satisfactory. Only the WWF World belts will do. Rick and Scott look at Money Inc. and see a team they can take, no problem.

Why shouldn't they be confident? The Steiners combine toughness, technical excellence, and ring savvy like few teams ever have. If they can stay healthy (their rough style has made them prone to serious injury), they can be the WWF's tag team not only of 1993, but the rest of the decade.

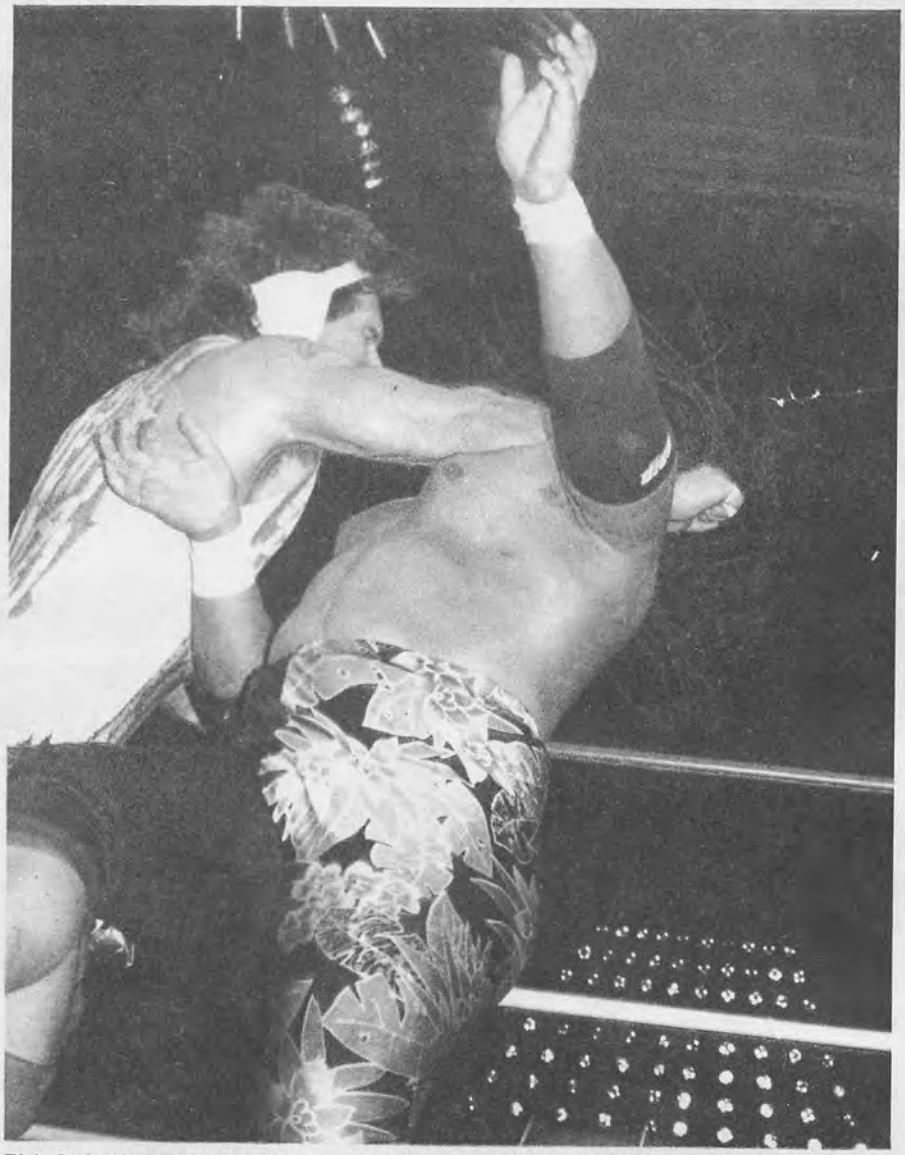
DOINK THE CLOWN

We don't know much about this guy. Even after his attack on Crush, we're still not quite sure what his plans are.

He started out as a prankster, tripping Big Bossman with cable and giving The Nasty Boys portraits of Money Inc. Now he has become dangerous. He's the "Chucky" of wrestling, but this time, it's not *Child's Play.*

After targeting Crush, Doink entered the ring, scoring convincing wins over Virgil. Naturally, Crush promises to be Doink's first significant competition.

"Crush's attitude is like, 'Who the heck does this guy



Rick Steiner's hard-hitting "Steinerline" is an excellent complement to his brother's acrobatic maneuver. WWF veterans underestimating these federation newcomers will be sorry.

think he is?' ", related a friend of the massive Hawaiian's. "It was a kind of shock. But now it's time for this Doink character to prove himself pretty quickly, 'cause Crush is hotter than I've ever seen him."

Bad news for Doink, the WWF's joker. And its wild card.

EL GIGANTE

1993 will likely see the arrival of former WCW star El Gigante. Whether or not he is *called* El Gigante is not important. The man is 7'7". As Baron Von Raschke might say, that is all the people need to know.

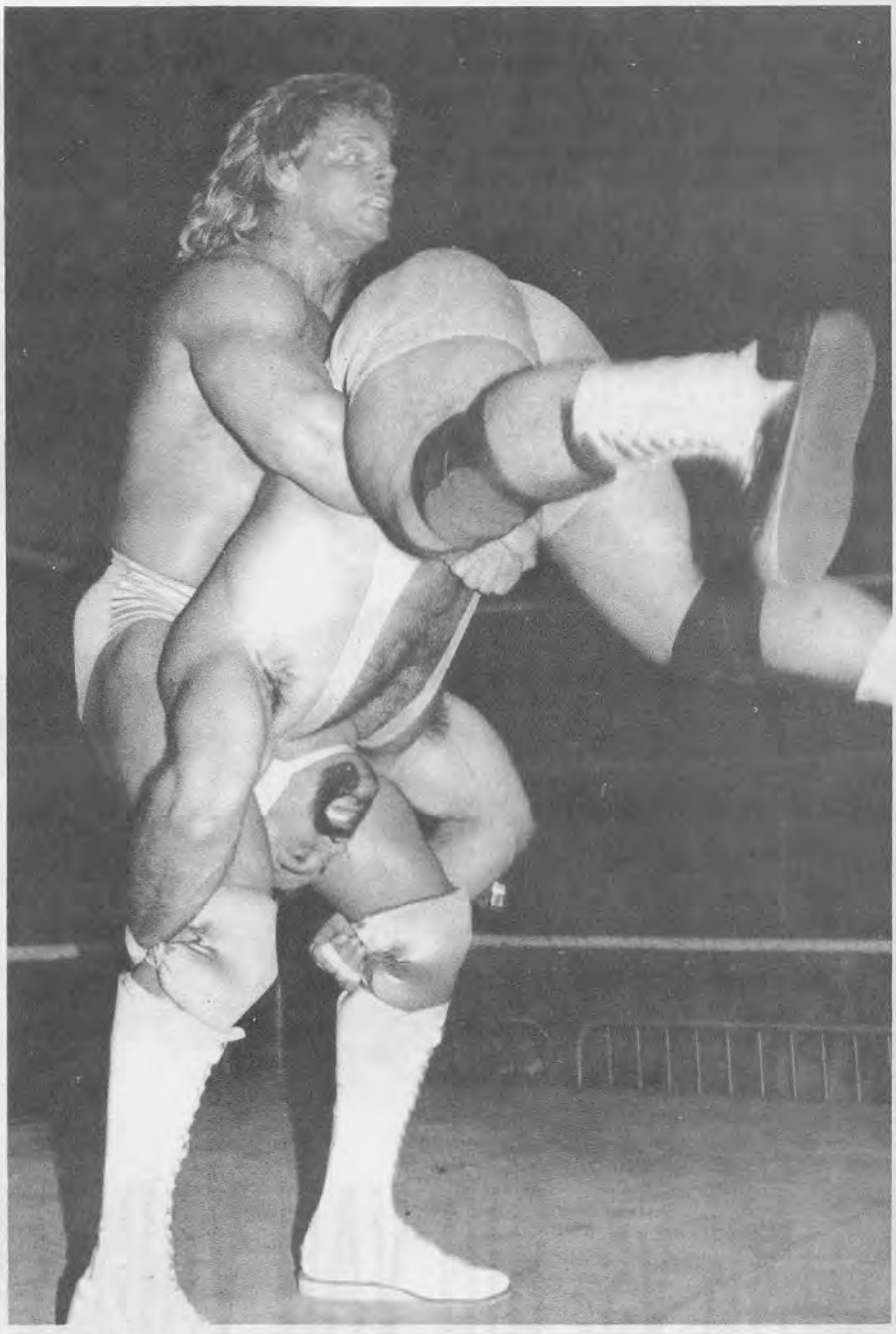
"When a man has that kind of size—watch out!" said David Sierra, who helped train Gigante in WCW. "Gigante is far, far from his prime. When he begins to use all his skills, he will be extremely formidable."



In WCW, El Gigante showed plenty of power but not much promise. He hopes to give his career a lift by signing with the WWF.

Others remain skeptical. They point out that Gigante actually accomplished little in WCW, potential or not. They're taking the classic, wait-and-see attitude.

It could be Gigante's year, or it could be the year he flops.



Former WCW champion Lex Luger is expected to make his WWF debut in March. Last year, Luger was part of the WBF.

LEX LUGER

According to contract, "Total Package" Lex Luger, formerly of the World Bodybuilding Federation, will become eligible to compete in the WWF in March. At press time, there was no word yet as to his definite plans, but one can safely assume that every wrestler in the federation—every *smart* wrestler—is watching him very closely.

Luger was one of the greatest wrestlers in WCW history. He held their World title, U.S. title, and World tag team title. Assuming he's 100 percent after his motorcycle accident of last year, he could easily have the same kind of success in the WWF.

"Luger can be a superstar here," said a WWF official. "He's got it all: the size, the skills, the smarts. But this is a tough place. At first, he'll have to get in line, just like everyone else."

Lex Luger standing in line? Oh, what a year it should be! □

Sting is the King of Cable, but Big Van Vader, the new WCW World champion, isn't a willing subject. Their feud started last April and threatens to continue throughout 1993—but that doesn't seem to bother either one of them

Photos by Ed Crawford

STING vs. BIG VAN VADER

BRUISED, BATTERED, BEATEN . . . AND LOVING IT!



By Dave Rosenbaum

SEVERAL MINUTES PASSED before anyone in The Omni realized what was happening, that Sting wasn't getting battered by Big Van Vader; he was *letting* Big Van Vader batter him!

Not, in fact, until Sting draped his arms over the top rope and began swinging his head from side-to-side did anyone catch on. Even Jesse Ventura, providing commentary for the pay-per-view telecast of the Starrcade '92 card, was slow to catch Sting's game plan.

"Nobody would have ever expected him to do that, so nobody was looking for it," Ventura said. "Actually, I realized it about two minutes before I said anything on the air, but I was so shocked that I wanted to make sure I was right. Then all of these images of Muhammad Ali and George Foreman in Zaire started coming back to me, and they matched what was happening exactly. It was the ol' rope-a-dope—in a *wrestling* match! It was an amazing thing to watch—just amazing."

But there was another amazing aspect of the match that few people realized until watching the videotape the next day: Sting wasn't just taking abuse from Vader and absorbing the pain. He seemed to be enjoying the whole thing!

And, a little later in the card—after Sting had defeated Vader for the King of Cable championship—Vader attacked Sting prior to Battlebowl. Look closely: Both men had slight smiles on their faces. Most competitors would've been too exhausted to continue, but Sting and Vader were relishing the pain and violence!

"At this point, I know what Vader's all about and he knows what I'm all about," Sting said. "He's my archrival and I'm his, and there comes a point in any feud when you really start to enjoy what's going on. You start to respect your opponent. I'm not going to sit here and say I like Vader, because I don't, but I certainly respect his abilities, his power, and his incredible size. I'd be crazy not to."

Crazy is the operative word here. Sting went crazy in April when he had his ribs broken by Vader. In July, Vader defeated Sting for the WCW World title. Throughout 1992, in fact, Vader was the one man Sting couldn't handle. Beating Vader became Sting's top priority.

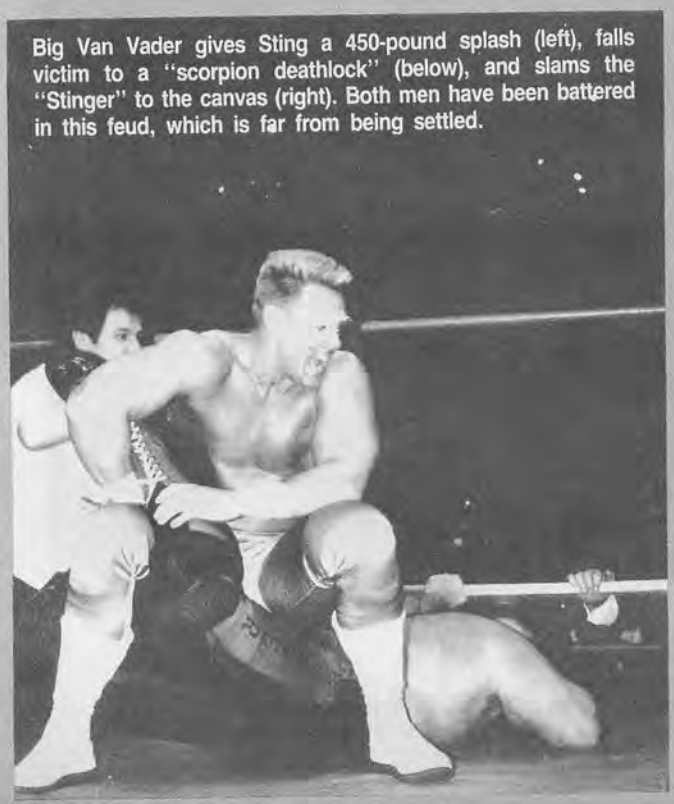
Vader, on the other hand, quickly realized Sting wasn't going to lay down and die. Sting's ribs were broken, but he refused to give in to Vader. The World title match was a classic. Vader, who had dominated his competition in Japan, had never met an opponent like Sting.

The second greatest testament to Sting's ability is the hundreds of hours Vader and manager Harley Race spent devising ways to get rid of Sting. The greatest testament to Sting's ability is that Race and Vader failed; in the end, Sting was the King of Cable.

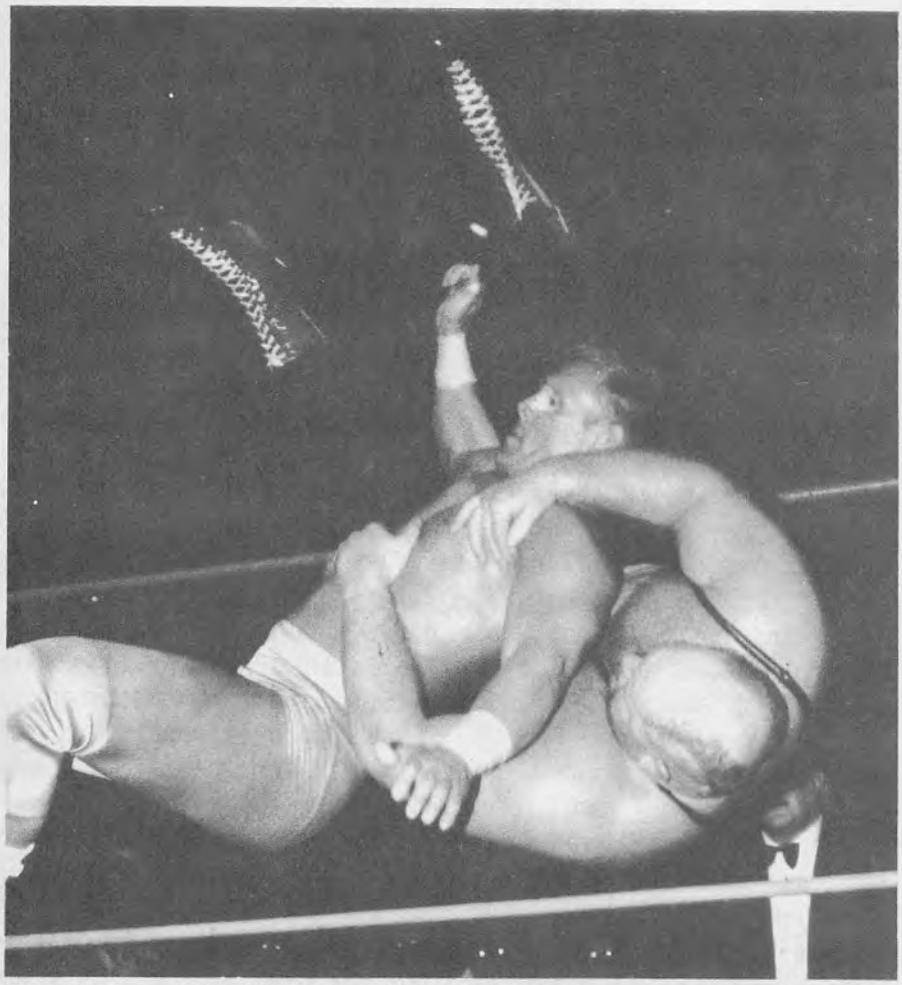
"Do we respect Sting?" Race said. "Let's just say we respect his good fortune. But to say this war is over is far from the truth. You saw the way Vader went after Sting before Battlebowl. That means the war has just begun."

Those words don't concern Sting.

Big Van Vader gives Sting a 450-pound splash (left), falls victim to a "scorpion deathlock" (below), and slams the "Stinger" to the canvas (right). Both men have been battered in this feud, which is far from being settled.







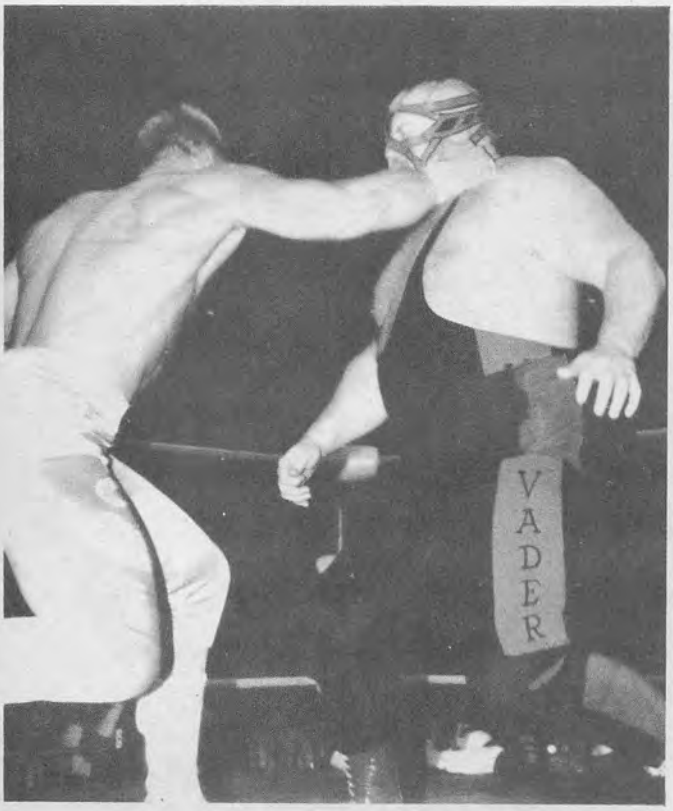
Sting gives away nearly 200 pounds to Vader but is still able to execute maneuvers such as this Samoan backdrop. Vader grudgingly respects Sting's ring skills.

He's enjoying the battle. He wants it to go on. Besides, he believes he has Vader solved, even though Vader regained the WCW World title from Ron Simmons two days after Starrcade in Baltimore.

Take their King of Cable match. Vader seemed to be in complete control. He slowed the match to his pace and turned it into a battle of power. Vader also scored a psychological edge in the seventh minute when Sting executed his scorpion leglock but Vader grabbed the ropes and avoided submission.

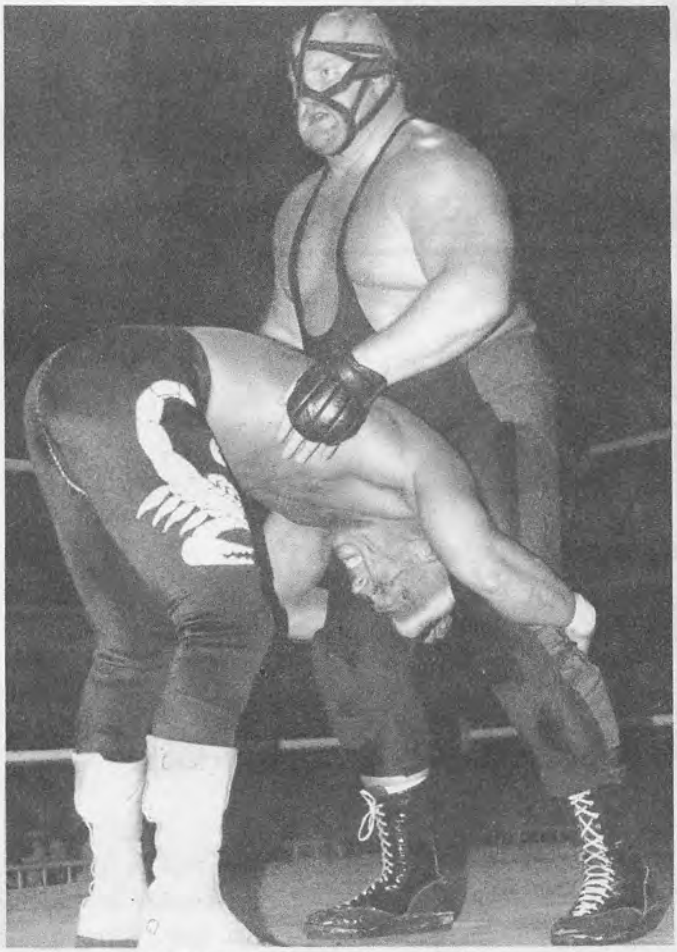
"That was as good a scorpion as I've ever put on anyone," Sting said. "Most men would've submitted long before they even had a chance to reach the ropes."

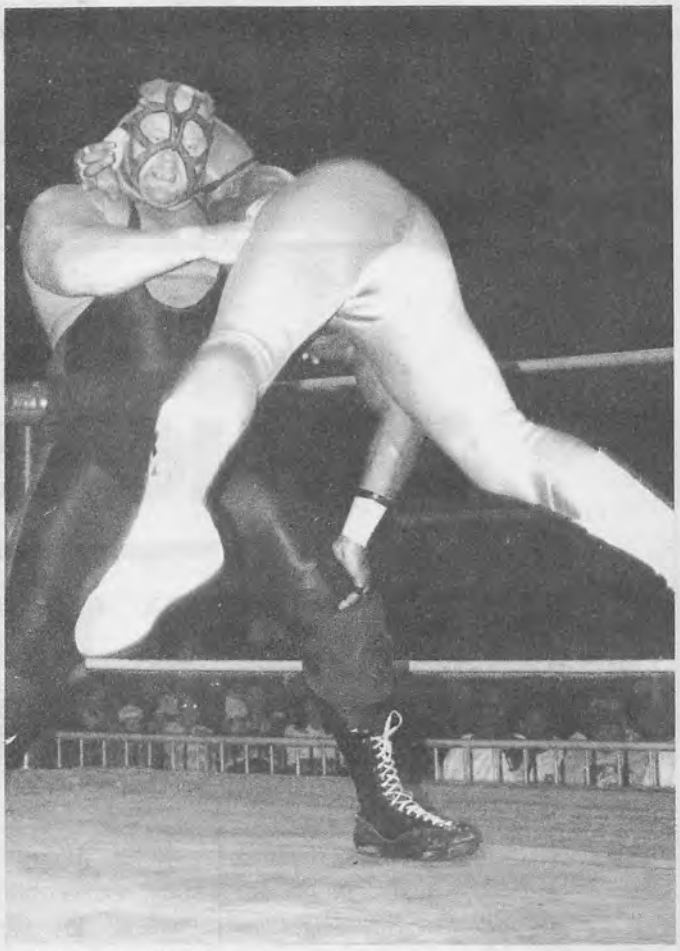
From that point on, Vader dominated the match. Using a mixture of punches, splashes, and clotheslines, Vader assaulted Sting while Sting allowed himself to get assaulted, figuring Vader would punch himself out. Vader launched punch after punch, but Sting just bounced off the ropes like a rubber doll with no feeling.



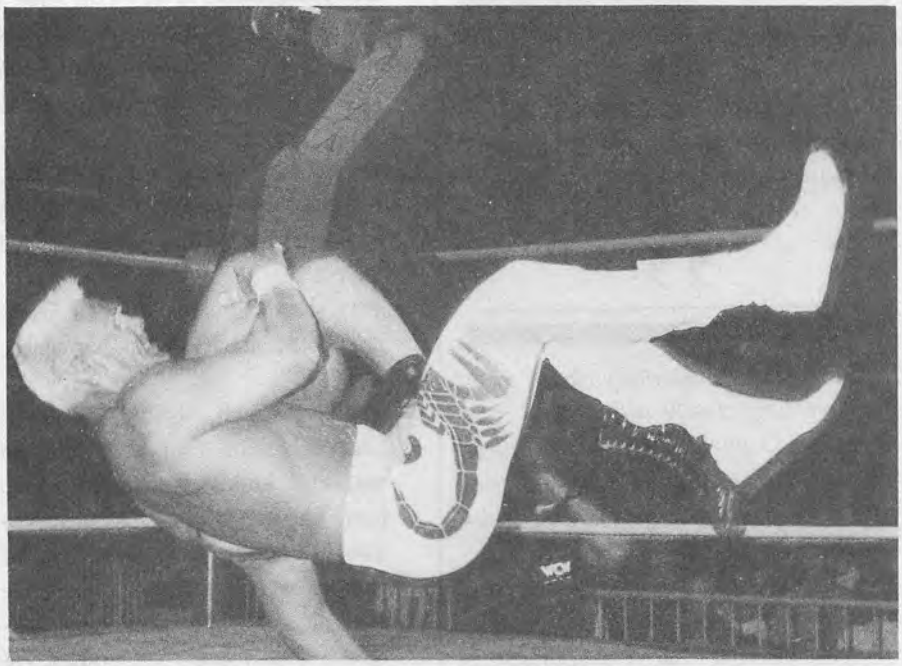


When Sting and Vader traded blows (left), Sting used the "rope-a-dope" strategy popularized by Muhammad Ali. In the past, Vader has used his strength to toss around Sting like a rag doll (right).





Vader broke Sting's ribs in April before defeating him for the title in July (above left). He then lost the title to Ron Simmons (above right) before recently regaining it. The feud is now for the World title, which means one man is due for a tumble (below).



Then, with 15:10 gone, Sting caught Vader off the ropes, slammed him to the mat, and covered him for a two-count. Sting then made the mistake of getting distracted by Race while Vader snuck up from behind. Vader climbed to the top rope and splashed Sting, but Sting caught Vader and pinned him.

"I was exhausted," Sting said. "There's no way I wanted to wrestle another match."

Sting's defense of his Battlebowl title didn't last long. Even more exhausted after Vader's prematch attack, Sting eliminated Dan Spivey and saved The Great Muta from elimination before running into Vader once again.

Actually, Vader ran into Sting. The momentum of a thunderous Vader clothesline carried both men over the top rope and out of Battlebowl.

Their day was over. But their feud isn't.

"It's fun," Vader admitted. "And it's gonna be even more fun when I put an end to Sting, and keep him away from the World title."

"When I pin him again, I'll be known as Vader's master," said Sting, rubbing his hands together with anticipation. "And I'll take the World title back as part of the bargain. Man, won't *that* be fun?"

For the rest of us, it'll just be fun to watch. □

HOTSEAT

PAUL E. DANGEROUSLY

"I WANT *YOU* FOR THE DANGEROUS ALLIANCE!"

PAUL E. DANGEROUSLY has taken quite a tumble in the last few months. But ***Pro Wrestling Illustrated's*** *1992 Manager of the Year has vowed to land on his feet.*

One year ago, the "Psycho Yuppie" was the most dominant force in WCW. He had assembled The Dangerous Alliance, the greatest collection of rulebreakers since The Four Horsemen. With Dangerously at the controls, the Alliance controlled three of the federation's five major belts for four months.

But things began falling apart. Arn Anderson and Bobby Eaton lost the WCW World tag team title in May. Larry Zbyszko was fired in July. Steve Austin lost the TV title in September. And U.S. champion Rick Rude adopted Madusa as his own personal manager.

Dangerously suffered the ultimate indignation at Halloween Havoc. After firing Madusa with an anti-feminist tirade, Dangerously was attacked by the former AWA women's champion and took a tremendous beating. Three weeks later at Clash of the Champions XXI, Madusa embarrassed Dangerously in a five-minute match.

While WCW fan favorites talk about Dangerously in the past tense, Paul E. has stepped back into the shadows, plotting to reform The Dangerous Alliance. No deals have been finalized, but Dangerously claims to be working very closely with several rulebreakers. Copy Editor Chris Bernucca listened to Dangerously rant and rave about his plans to restructure his rulebreaking stable.

"This time around, I'll be ready for all the pitfalls, the internal strife, the clashing egos."

Q: The last time we interviewed you (*The Wrestler*, December 1992), you believed that The Dangerous Alliance still exerted the same power over WCW that it did at the beginning of 1992. Do you still believe that?

A: Of course not. Only a fool would say that.

Q: But you said it back in September.

A: I said it then because it was *true* then. At that time, Steve Austin was TV champ, Rick Rude was U.S. champ, we had just broken Larry Zbyszko's arm, I had what I thought was a nice deal working with Steve Williams and Terry Gordy. Hey, things were going good. Real good.

Q: Here's your chance to speak out, without interruption or rebuttal. From your standpoint, what happened?

A: Very simple. People stopped listening to me. That's what happened.

Q: That's it?

A: That's enough, isn't it? Look, Larry Zbyszko stopped listening to me, and look what happened to him. The guy is Jim Ross' ventriloquist dummy now. Steve Austin stopped listening to me. I don't see any belts around his waist anymore. Bobby and Arn started listening to Michael Hayes instead of me and now they're losing to the immortal Erik Watts. Rick Rude? Hey, he stopped listening to me, too.

Q: And now he's listening to Madusa.


SONY





Paul E. Dangerously is recruiting wrestlers for his "new" Dangerous Alliance—and some of the people he's considering may surprise you (above). He's definitely *not* considering Madusa, whom he battled at Clash of the Champions XXI (below).

> **"The Dangerous Alliance didn't break down. It became too good for its own good."**

A: Are you out of your mind? The only person Rick Rude listens to is Rick Rude. Madusa is just along for the ride. Look, guys like Steve and Bobby, they're good wrestlers who can be great with the right management. Rick Rude is already a great wrestler. He doesn't need any help from anybody.

Q: Then why did you sign him?

A: Gee, I don't know. Why did the San Francisco Giants sign Barry Bonds? Because he's great, you moron! Guys like Bonds, guys like Rick Rude—they make managers look good, and they make managers a lot of money.

Q: You mentioned Madusa. I was wondering . . .

A: Only after you mentioned her. I knew you were going to bring this up, so let's get it over with. What, pray tell, were you wondering?

Q: I was wondering what was going through your mind at Clash of the Champions XXI. That had to be pretty embarrassing.

A: You know what's embarrassing? Having someone from the opposite sex double for you, like backstabbing Mike Thor did for that tomboy.

Q: Again, what was going through *your* mind?

A: Look, that's ancient history now. All this crap you're bringing up, that's the old Dangerous Alliance. It's all been photographed and chronicled and archived and forgotten. There's a billion Chinese people that don't give a damn. Let's talk about something that means something.

Q: Like what?

A: Like the *new* Dangerous Alliance.

Q: You're serious, aren't you?

A: I've never been more serious in my whole life. Through my powerful public relations presence and my contacts in the sport, everyone who's anyone has been told, "I want you for The Dangerous Alliance."

Q: Like who?

A: Wouldn't *you* like to know.

Q: Yes, I would. And so would our readers.

A: Your readers! A reader is nothing but a fan who uses the correct bathroom at the arena. Why should they be privy to this information? And why should you?



Q: Because you wouldn't want this interview to end right now and tarnish your "powerful public relations presence." Does the new Dangerous Alliance include anyone from the old Dangerous Alliance?

A: It might. Steve and I still get along pretty well. But that's it.

Q: Could Barry Windham be part of the new group?

A: After seeing what he did to Dustin Rhodes, Rick Steamboat, and Shane Douglas at the Clash, Barry Windham can wrestle for me whenever he wants. Brian Pillman

is also someone who has a certain appeal to us. But why do you think my new Alliance is limited to WCW wrestlers, or even wrestlers?

Q: Who do you have in mind?

A: How about Lawrence Taylor, who's only the greatest linebacker of all-time? LT and I go way back. He's about to retire from football. And WCW has got a former football player as champion right now. The timing is perfect.

Q: Do you think Taylor can be a successful wrestler?

A: Why don't you ask Joe Theismann that question? Taylor snapped his leg like a dried branch. Lawrence Taylor made his living in the NFL by shortening the careers of quarterbacks. He can continue doing that right in WCW. Doesn't Erik Watts claim that he used to be a quarterback?

Q: Good point. Who else?

A: I'm not going to name any more names, because everything is speculation at this point. You call yourself a reporter? Start using your sources to track them down.

Q: Fair enough. But why a new Dangerous Alliance? Why not just one or two wrestlers? Don't you think that the Alliance broke down because it became too big to handle?

A: The Dangerous Alliance didn't break down. It became too good for its own good. When all of us were on the same page, we were unstoppable. But when certain people started freelancing, we had problems. Success went to the head of certain unmentionables. They know who they are.

Q: With The Dangerous Alliance, you won titles, and you nearly became WCW's top power broker, but its rise and fall lasted just one year. Do you really think another rulebreaking stable can work?



"I can make any rulebreaking stable work."

A: You still don't get it, do you? I can make any rulebreaking stable work. It's just a question of getting them to work together, and to stay together. I learned a lot in managing The Dangerous Alliance, and I made some mistakes. But, I . . .

Q: Wait a minute. Was that Paul E. Dangerously I just heard admitting that he made a mistake?

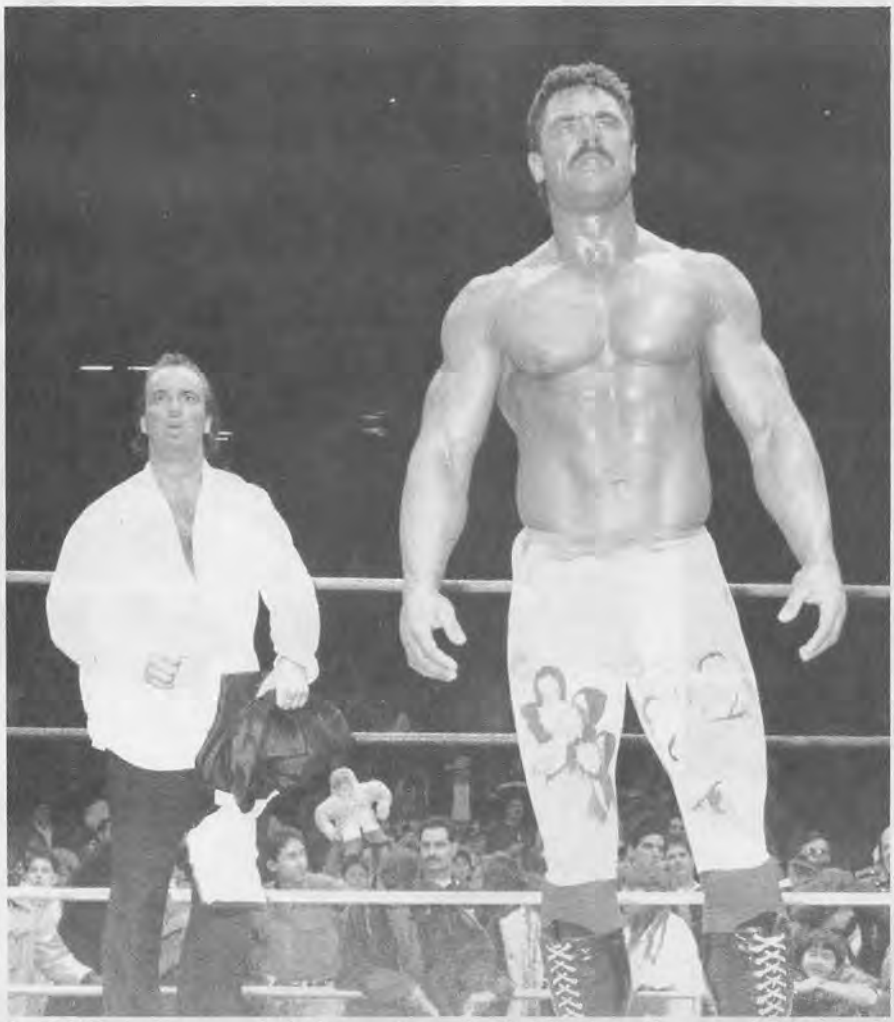
A: Yes, which is more than I can say for the staff of your magazine. And you can bet I won't make those same mistakes again. This time around, I'll be ready for all the pitfalls, the internal strife, the clashing egos. I'm going to make the first Dangerous Alliance an answer to a trivia question.

Q: They already are.

A: Oh, yeah? What's the question?

Q: What rulebreaking stable had a manager who lost a series of matches to a woman?

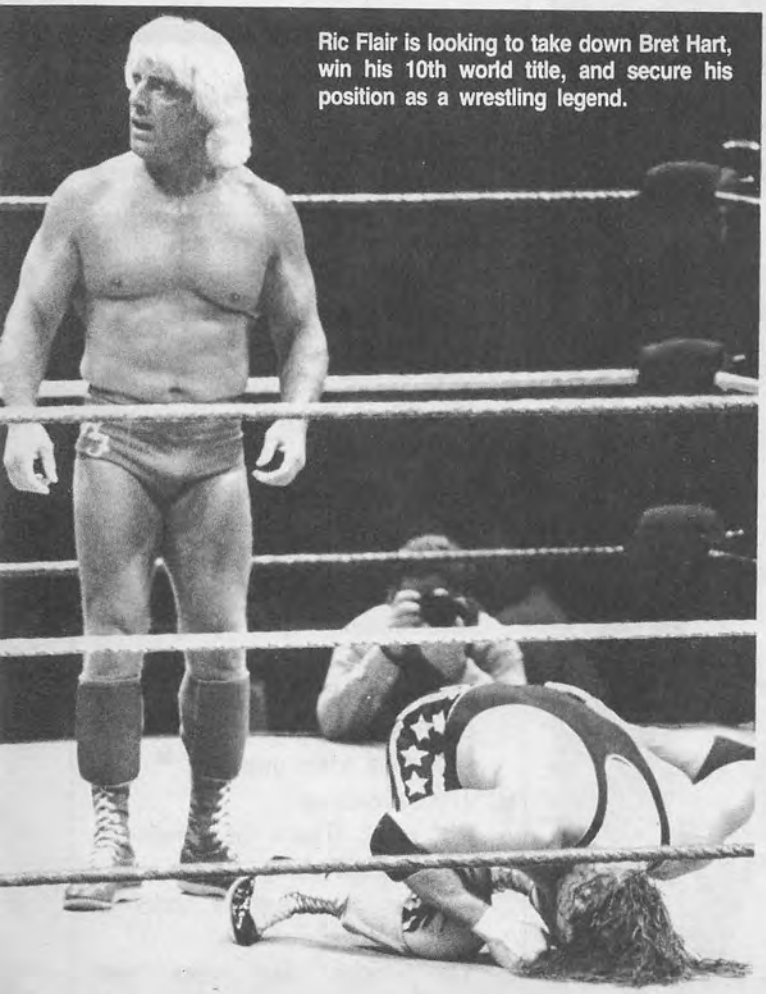
A: Very funny. Get outta here, now! □



In Rick Rude, Dangerously had a great wrestler, but the two often were left looking for answers. Paul E. says the "Ravishing One" doesn't need his help anymore.

Seeking World Title Number 10:

RIC FLAIR– LUSTING FOR REDEMPTION



Ric Flair is looking to take down Bret Hart, win his 10th world title, and secure his position as a wrestling legend.



By Andy Rodriguez

REGGIE JACKSON ONCE said that if he hit 500 home runs, there was no way he could be denied entry into baseball's Hall of Fame. Despite all the controversy in which he had been involved on and off the field—despite what some sportswriters thought of him as a person and as a player—500 homers was an achievement they would have to glorify with the sport's ultimate honor. Several years later, Jackson reached hit his magic 500, and this January he was indeed voted into the Hall of Fame.

Ric Flair finds himself similarly placed. Many critics are not satisfied with his seven NWA/WCW World and two WWF World titles. They see a man who has cheated his way to most of those victories. They use his lifestyle as an excuse to denigrate his accomplishments.

Flair plans to deal with those critics, but before he does, he must first win back the WWF World title.

The "Nature Boy's" second WWF World title reign—and ninth World title overall—ended at the hands of Bret "Hitman" Hart on October 12 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, a province in Hart's home country of Canada. That offered Flair one excuse for the loss. He also claimed he was ill, in a considerably weakened condition to make a proper defense.

However, Flair quickly stopped making excuses, and started plotting ways to regain the belt. The chief problem for him was that many of those plots involved his aide, "Mr. Perfect" Curt Hennig. When they split in November, Flair was left without his most important ally.

It actually turned out to be less of a hindrance than he had imagined. Forced to rely mainly on the help of Razor Ramon, Flair attacked vigorously. The result was that he received several shots against Hart. He has yet to win, but he has come close.

"Nature Boy" Ric Flair's bid for a 10th world championship is more than a quest for personal glory. It is his attempt to win back lost admiration and respect and, more significantly, to secure his place in the pantheon as the sport's all-time great







Flair tosses Hart into the ropes (above left), but the "Hitman" responds with a suplex (above right). Many wrestlers respect Flair for this titles, but not the methods by which he achieved them.

"The matches have proved Bret's worth as a World champion," said Flair's former partner, Greg Valentine. "He has really been impressive. But the matches have also demonstrated that Flair is a long way from being finished. It's very easy to see him winning the belt again."

By capturing title number 10, Flair is hoping to win not supporters, but respect. He knows that most fans do not like him or the things for which he stands, but they can be made to respect him.

He demands respect because he knows that without respect, there is no acclaim. Without acclaim, there is no long-term recognition of his greatness.

Flair is an outstanding wrestler. Few can doubt that. No one calculates a game plan better than he does. He is a master of execution and knows exactly when to finish off an opponent.

The greatness has been obscured by various acts of treachery. Even Flair's staunchest supporters will not deny that. Nor will they deny that he has consistently broken the rules. They want respect for him almost exclusively on the basis of the world championships he has won.

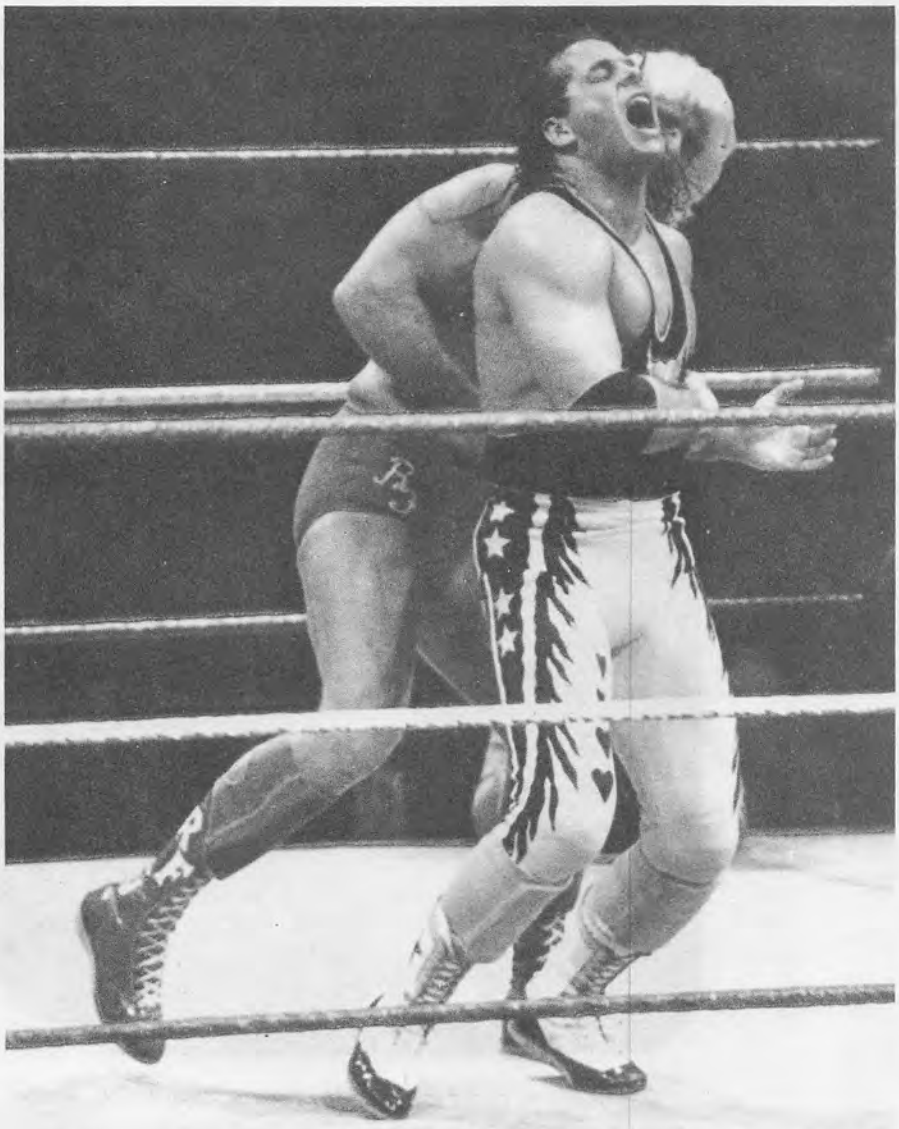
"Flair has to be respected for all that he's done," Valentine said. "And if he does beat Hart—or whoever else—to regain that belt, then he deserves even more respect. Who else has won 10 world titles? Verne Gagne won the AWA World belt nine times. *He* has plenty of respect. It may not be fair to compare the two, but in this case, I think it is. I think Flair will be remembered 20 years from now as a great champion, just like Gagne is today."

Many others are equally giving in their praise. To them, Flair is a legend. He is their idea of the perfect wrestler. However, if he becomes WWF World champion a third time, he must win over others.

"I've always thought of Flair as the kind of wrestler you admire, but not the kind you want to be," said Valentine. "A lot of guys look at him and say, 'He's great, but I would never do it his way.' "

Ultimately, though, Flair is going to be judged not by his peers, but by the public. If he is to achieve entrance into any wrestling hall of fame, he must win them over in large numbers. He has not come close to accomplishing that.

"Flair is a real pro in the sense that he's a great wrestler—and a winner," said Pat Leander, a longtime Flair-watcher from Ft. Worth,



Flair twists Hart's arm, making him scream in pain (above), and nearly scores a pin of the champion (below). The "Nature Boy" knows he has to win again to silence the critics.

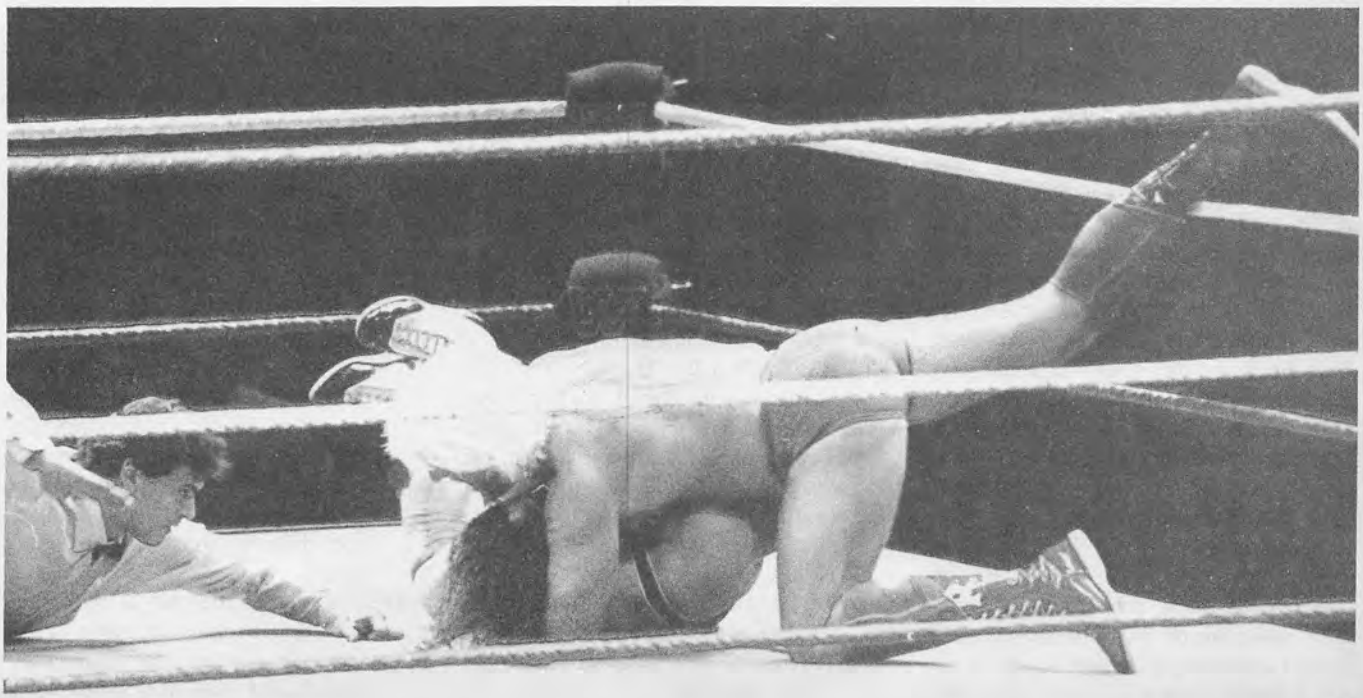
Texas. "But I've always gotten the sense that he doesn't conduct himself like someone who is making a bid for long-term greatness. To me, it's the classic case of being a legend in his own mind."

"Taken together, the World championships are all very impressive," said Lewis Johan, a fan from London who only recently began following Flair's controversial career. "It's an amazing resume. Only with Flair, there's no acknowledgement that the people have had anything to do with his success. He accepts all the credit for himself. No man, not even Flair, can be entirely independent."

Actually, Flair may be quite willing to give others credit for his success. However, his chief concern remains winning back a World title. If he sets one goal in 1993, that is it.

"Ric would give up the cars, the women, everything, for another belt," said a friend who is not a directly involved in the sport. "He's reached a point in his career where little else matters. I would even venture to say this: If he doesn't win one in '93, he'll retire. That's a strong statement, but he's that serious."

Flair doesn't just *want* to win. He *has* to win. □



The telephone wires sizzle every month as two top wrestlers voice their rage and hostility toward each other. This is the unedited transcript of their conversation, your chance to see the raw emotion that results when two antagonists face off . . . One on One

ONE O



"Get ready to bleed and beg for mercy, Von Erich. Your threats mean nothing to me. Your final days are coming!"
—Skandor Akbar

MUCH TO THE delight of his thousands of fans, Kerry Von Erich has returned to Texas, and he's as competitive as ever. That's good news to everyone in the Lone Star State but Von Erich's longtime enemy, Gen. Skandor Akbar. Von Erich's October 30, 1992, return to the Sportatorium in Dallas, Texas, immediately rekindled his feud with Akbar, the Arabian sadist who has lusted to spill the blood of Von Erich and his brothers for almost a decade.

Von Erich made his Texas return at a crucial moment for Al Perez. Following a lumberjack match between Perez and Abkar's veteran "hit man," Killer Brooks, Al found himself the victim of a two-on-one assault by the rulebreakers. Kerry broke up the attack against his one-time rival.

Incensed at Von Erich's "meddling," Akbar sent another of his henchmen, Black Bart, to try to cripple the returning hero. Akbar and Bart nearly accomplished that heinous deed at the Sportatorium on December 11, when Von Erich competed in a steel cage match against the Texas cowboy. When Kerry tried to exit the cage, Akbar slammed the door shut, striking Von Erich in the head—and allowing Bart the victory. A week later, however, Von Erich scored a convincing win over Bart, leading Akbar to try to find a new protege who has the potential to wipe out Kerry for good.

Why can't Akbar let Von Erich be? Even Kerry can't figure it out. We decided to let these adversaries speak to each other via phone. The communications cables oozed venom as the veterans verbally battled . . . "One On One."

SKANDOR AKBAR:
Well, Mr. Kerry Von Erich, the man I thought we were all finished with here in Texas, why did you come back? Did Brooklyn Brawler beat you in the WWF or something?

KERRY VON ERICH:
Listen, you camel jockey, I've just about had it with you. You're so determined to get rid of me that it's downright obsurd. I've had many feuds during my career. I feuded with Ric Flair, with Al Perez, with The Freebirds. But all of those feuds ended, and those guys were all willing to let them come to an end. But you . . . what's the matter, don't you have a life?

SA: Yes, I have a life, young man—a life that's committed to driving you out of Global forever. I manage the tag team of Black Bart and Johnny Mantell, and also Killer Brooks, and together we were starting to dominate the proceedings at the Sportatorium, just like the old days. And then you returned. *You!* Who asked you to come back? You are soon going to find out you've made the biggest mistake of your career.

KVE: The biggest mistake of my career was not wiping out your stable years ago. What's the deal? I can understand why you hate me so

N ONE



"Me against you, Akbar, one on one. What do you say? I bet you'd jump on the next plane back to the Middle East."
—Kerry Von Erich

much—after all, I've embarrassed you so many times in the past, I've lost count—but what's with Bart? I've never seen him like he is now; you've turned him into an animal.

SA: Think back, you simpleton. Who beat Bart for the old World Class title back in 1986?

KVE: Back in '86 . . . why, that was my brother, Kevin!

SA: Right you are, Von Erich. And Bart has never forgotten the way Kevin cheated and used foreign objects in order to win that championship.

KVE: That's a lie, Akbar, and you know it. Kevin won that match fair and square, mainly because Bart is a fat, untalented bully who wouldn't know a wrestling hold if he spent a month with Lou Thesz.

SA: You can try to hide the truth, but Bart and I know the score. Bart has been waiting for the time he can get his revenge, and he's about to take out his misery on your body, Kerry.

KVE: Oh, get real, Akbar! Bart hasn't come close to beating me. The only time he got a fluke victory is when you slammed that cage door on my head, but when I got a fair shake the next week, I beat that guy like a red-headed stepchild. So who's next, Akbar, Mantell? I say bring him on. Mantell knows a little more wrestling than Bart does, so maybe he can give me a match. And by the way, Ak, aren't *you* the one who is being humiliated these days?

SA: Laugh while you can, you overrated daddy's boy. I've got a certain cigar-chomping monster who's just waiting to bust open your melon head.

KVE: What's this—*Killer Brooks?* Akbar, the man has got to be pushing 45, 50 years old! How's that fossil going to give me a match? I'm still in my prime!

SA: You never had a prime, Von Erich. You can scoff at the Killer's veteran status if you want to. The only reason a man like that can still compete is that he's been one of the most vicious wrestlers around for more than 20 years. Have you seen the way he's been acting?

KVE: Yeah. He hasn't scored a pinfall victory in months!

SA: Absolutely correct, Kerry. And do you know why that is? He's been mauling Chaz, Manny Villalobos, and all the other undersized wimps around here, *intentionally* getting disqualified. He's just waiting for his chance to get at you . . . to run his sharpened fingernails through your scalp . . . to bite at your temples and throat . . . to see your blood run all over the Sportatorium mat! He's gonna end your career, boy, so get ready!

KVE: Akbar, you are one sick piece of gutter trash, you know that? I've had it with seeing your ugly face and beard every week. You better hope that Brooks is able to beat me, man. Because if he can't, I'm going after you. I don't care if I have to drag you in the ring to do it. But I'm going to the officials and ask them for a match—me against you, Akbar, one on one. What do you say? I bet you'd jump on the next plane back to the Middle East before you'd face me like that.

SA: Don't bet on it, idiot. Get ready to bleed and beg for mercy, Von Erich. Your threats mean nothing to me. Your final days are coming!

KVE: Your talk is cheap, Akbar—not as cheap as your turban, but cheap. □

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SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from page 5)



Yokozuna has the power, size, and skill to win the WWF World title, writes reader Henry Chi, who has new respect for manager Mr. Fuji.

you're just too undisciplined to win a major belt. You're such a wildman that you'd never change your style.

Jack should forget about managing and get back to wrestling, where he at least doesn't make a fool of himself.

TINA ASHWARI
London, Ontario

TIME FOR THE MILKMAN

I noticed in the February 1993 "Names Makin' News" a mention of Jake "The Milkman" Milliman. You wrote that he had been forced to retire, but that he had recently returned to the ring.

Really, I was glad to read it. I always liked Jake. He wasn't much of a wrestler, but the little guy gave his all in every match.

I'll never forget Larry Zbyszko's classic line when he chose Milliman to wrestle a "turkey match" during the AWA Team Challenge Series: "What's more American than the milkman?"

Go get 'em, Jake!

ROBERT HERNANDEZ
St. Paul, MN

YO, YOKOZUNA

Is anyone else as impressed as I am with Yokozuna? This guy is amazing! With that tremendous bulk, his power moves are positively crunching. He weighs around 500 pounds, but he moves around extremely well. In addition, he has a really nasty attitude.

For years, Mr. Fuji was regarded as something of a laughingstock as a WWF manager. Few fans took him seriously. However, with Yokozuna in his stable, I believe he has a winner. It was becoming clear that Berzerker was going absolutely nowhere, but Yokozuna is an entirely different case.

Right now, Yokozuna can easily defeat Intercontinental champion Shawn Michaels. No question about it. World champion Bret Hart is another story at this point. He has the knowhow to outsmart the massive sumo wrestler. Give Yokozuna another few months, though, and Bret's in trouble.

The WWF may soon have its first Japanese World champion.

HENRY CHI
San Francisco □

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Everything you always wanted to know about **RICK** and **SCOTT STEINER**!



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in the April 1993 issue of
Pro Wrestling Illustrated

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The Wrestler



Is **RICK STEAMBOAT** getting greedy in his quest for title glory?



RAZOR RAMON: He'll win a World title by March—or he'll be a bum by April!

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February 1976/Stories include: Andre, Strongbow, Lewin, Brazil.
March 1976/Stories include: Ladd, Funk, Sheik, Robinson.
August 1976/Stories include: Funks, Mascaras, Sammartino, Putski.
October 1976/Stories include: Sammartino, Race, Johnson, Jones.



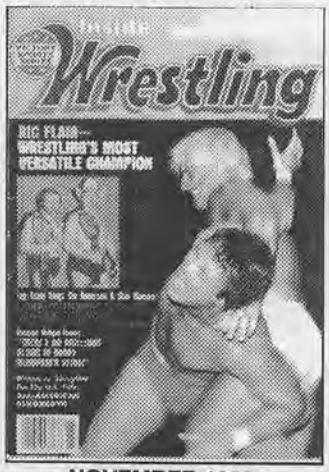
OCTOBER 1976

November 1976/Stories include: Mascaras, Wrestling II, Funk, Sammartino.
December 1976/Stories include: Stasiak, Rhodes, Bockwinkel, Orton.
August 1977/Stories include: Backlund, Graham, Mascaras, Lawler.
September 1977/Stories include: Sammartino, Andre, Mascaras, Brisco.
October 1977/Stories include: Andre, Rhodes, Backlund, Mulligan.
March 1978/Stories include: Rhodes, Valentine, Backlund, Bockwinkel.
April 1978/Stories include: Backlund, Graham, Steamboat, Bruiser.
December 1978/Stories include: Sammartino, Rhodes, Wrestling II, Bravo.
January 1979/Stories include: Sammartino, Mulligan, Rhodes, Backlund.
February 1979/Stories include: Race, Sammartino, Steamboat, Ladd.
April 1979/Stories include: Andre, Flair, Backlund, Jones.
June 1979/Stories include: Rhodes, Superstar, Bockwinkel, Backlund.
September 1979/Stories include: Steamboat, Mascaras, Strongbow, Garvin.
February 1980/Stories include: Patera, Snuka, Santana, Albano.
May 1980/Stories include: Sammartino, Murdoch, Mulligan, Bockwinkel.
June 1980/Stories include: Putski, Andre, Hernandez, Keirn.
August 1980/Stories include: Sammartino, Wrestling II, Baker, Koloff.
September 1980/Stories include: Mascaras, Rhodes, Ladd, Iron Sheik.
November 1980/Stories include: Rhodes, Putski, Bockwinkel, Koloff.
January 1981/Stories include: Race, Snuka, Morales, Slater.



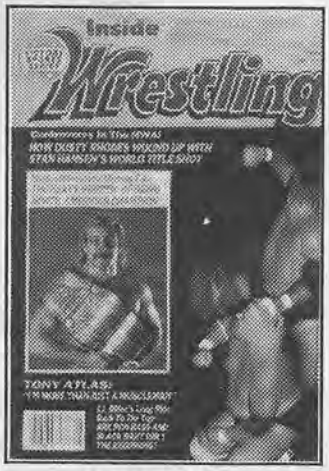
JANUARY 1981

April 1981/Stories include: Albano, Sammartino Jr., Race, McGraw.
May 1981/Stories include: Iron Sheik, Von Erich, Backlund, Santana.
September 1981/Stories include: Patera, Koloff, Khan, Junkyard Dog.
February 1982/Stories include: Valentine, Flair, Steamboat, Rhodes.
March 1982/Stories include: Rich, Backlund, Idol, Spoiler.
April 1982/Stories include: Rhodes, Andre, Von Erich, Piper.
May 1982/Stories include: Backlund, Rhodes, Hogan, Von Erich.
June 1982/Stories include: Valentine, Von Erich, Slaughter, Morales.
July 1982/Stories include: Hogan, Rhodes, Steamboat, Adonis.
August 1982/Stories include: Andre, Bockwinkel, Steamboat, Backlund.
September 1982/Stories include: Atlas, Piper, Lawler, Brody.
October 1982/Stories include: Rich, Andre, Piper, Dillon.
November 1982/Stories include: Flair, Snuka, Von Erich, Slaughter.
December 1982/Stories include: Mulligan, Rich, Lawler, Grand Wizard.



NOVEMBER 1982

February 1983/Stories include: Rhodes, Hogan, DiBiase, Race.
March 1983/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Graham, Johnson, Funk.
April 1983/Stories include: Snuka, Patera, Kabuki, Rich.
May 1983/Stories include: Rich, Snuka, Sullivan, Steamboat.
June 1983/Stories include: Studd, Garvin, Rogers, Orton.
July 1983/Stories include: Hogan, Freebirds, Rhodes, Youngblood.
August 1983/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Garvin, Sullivan, Lawler.
September 1983/Stories include: Zbyszko, Piper, Andre, Hayes.
October 1983/Stories include: Wrestling II, Backlund, Junkyard Dog, Rhodes.
November 1983/Stories include: Hogan, Reed, Von Erich, Dillon.
December 1983/Stories include: Von Erich, Samoans, Valiant, Road Warriors.
March 1984/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Rich, Rhodes, Garvin.
April 1984/Stories include: Flair, Steamboat, Superstar, Windham.
May 1984/Stories include: Iron Sheik, Steamboat, Rotundo, Von Erich.
June 1984/Stories include: Flair, Slaughter, Cornette, DiBiase.
July 1984/Stories include: Valiant, Flair, Martel, Wrestling II.
August 1984/Stories include: Junkyard Dog, Magnum T.A., Idol, Spoiler.
September 1984/Stories include: Martel, Brody, Von Erich, Iron Sheik.
October 1984/Stories include: Billy Jack, Road Warriors, Steamboat, Piper.
November 1984/Stories include: Rhodes, Rich, Hernandez, Warriors.
December 1984/Stories include: Hogan, Warriors, Sullivan, Magnum T.A.
January 1985/Stories include: Magnum T.A., Rhodes, Atlas, Von Erich.



JANUARY 1985

February 1985/Stories include: Rich, Adams, Valiant, Flair.
March 1985/Stories include: Backlund, Billy Jack, Koloffs, Von Erichs.
April 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Albano & Hogan, Steamboat, Gordy.
May 1985/Stories include: Slaughter, Garvin, Albano, Koloffs.
June 1985/Stories include: Warriors, Slaughter, Von Erichs, Studd & Patera.
July 1985/Stories include: Hogan, Von Erich, Nikita, Warriors.
August 1985/Stories include: Wrestlemania, Zbyszko vs. The Tonga Kid.
September 1985/Stories include: Piper, Flair, Fantastics, Magnum T.A.
October 1985/Stories include: Russian menace, Von Erichs, Rude & Barr.
November 1985/Stories include: Steamboat, Adams, Freebirds, Cornette.
December 1985/Stories include: Santana, Brody, Andersons, Murdoch.
January 1986/Stories include: Steamboat, Mike Von Erich, Warriors.
February 1986/Stories include: R'n'R Express, Warriors, Mulligan & Windham.

March 1986/Stories include: Windham & Rotundo, Warriors-Russians, Rude.
April 1986/Stories include: Scott Hall, Rhodes, Flair, Andre, Bill Watts
May 1986/Stories include: Randy Savage, Stan Hansen, Rock 'n' Rolls.
June 1986/Stories include: Bulldogs, Windham-Flair, Lance Von, Blanchard.
July 1986/All-American Special Issue. Stories include: Hogan, Slaughter, T.A.
August 1986/Stories include: WrestleMania 2, Garvins, Martel, Fab Ones.
September 1986/Stories include: Andre,Rhodes-T.A., Adams, Windham.
October 1986/Stories include: Flair-Lugar, Savage, Fantastics, Warriors.



OCTOBER 1986

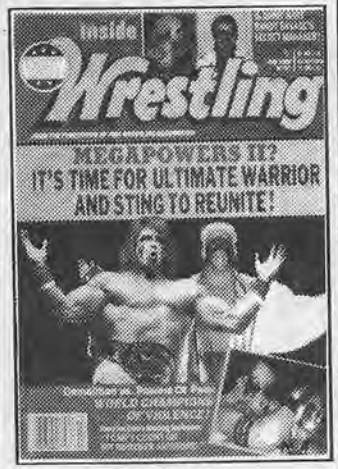
November 1986/Stories include: Warriors-Flair, Bulldogs, Watts, Adams.
December 1986/Stories include: Hogan-Adonis, R&R Express, Baby Doll.
January 1987/Stories include: Rude-Flair, Piper, T.A., Taylor.
February 1987/Stories include: Hogan-Piper-Orndorff, Taylor, Flair.
March 1987/Stories include: Flair, Missy, Luger, Bulldogs, Koloffs.
April 1987/Stories include: Windham, Steamboat, Ellering, Duggan.
May 1987/Stories include: Windham & Luger, Steamboat, Hogan-Andre.
June 1987/Stories include: Piper-Adonis, Horsemen, Adams, Hall, Brody.
July 1987/Stories include: Danny Davis, DiBiase, Rockers, Rotundo, Andersons.



JULY 1987

August 1987/Stories include: Dusty & Nikita, Hogan, Mike Von, Cornette.
September 1987/Stories include: Hogan-Race, R&R Exp., Rich, Honky Tonk.
October 1987/Stories include: R&R Express, Hogan, Taylor-Adams, Lawler.
November 1987/Stories include: War Games, Mr. T, Bulldogs, Rhodes.
December 1987/Stories include: Freebirds, Rhodes, Magnum, Savage, Perez.
January 1988/Stories include: R&R-Horsemen, Hogan, Flair-Garvin.
February 1988/Stories include: Savage, Kevin Von, Sting, Tully & Arn.
March 1988/Stories include: Bigelow, Adams, Koloff, Honky Tonk, Freebirds.
April 1988/Stories include: Luger-Flair, Ultimate Warrior, Andre-Hogan-DiBiase.
May 1988/Stories include: Zbyszko, DiBiase, Warriors, Rockers, Fritz Von.
June 1988/Stories include: Warriors, Savage, R&R Express, Baby Doll.
July 1988/Stories include: Hogan-Savage-DiBiase, Kerry & Hayes, Sting.
August 1988/Stories include: Savage, Missy Hyatt, Sting, Hayes, Honky Tonk.
October 1988/Stories include: Megapowers vs. Megabucks, Horsemen, Lawler.
November 1988/Stories include: Rhodes, Kerry, Luger, Muraco, Freebirds.
December 1988/Stories include: Powers of Pain, Ultimate, Flair, Piper.

January 1989/Stories include: R&R Express, Hogan, Sting, Arn, Kerry-Lawler.
February 1989/Stories include: Hogan-Bossman, Tully & Arn, Warriors-Windham-Sting.
March 1989/Stories include: Hennig, Midnights-Midnights, Fuller & Golden, Ultimate.
May 1989/Stories include: Hogan, Steiner, Morton, Bad Co., Taylor.
June 1989/Stories include: Hogan-Savage, Luger, Steamboat-Flair.
July 1989/Stories include: Savage, Windham, Kerry, Demolition, Sting.
August 1989/Stories include: Hulkamania, Steamboat, Rude, Cornette.



JULY 1989

September 1989/Stories include: Savage-Hogan, Luger, Mascaras, Rhodes.
October 1989/Stories include: Hall & Pillman & Vicious, Hennig, Swats vs. Warriors, Rhodes.
November 1989/Stories include: Elizabeth, Sting, Luger, Paul E., Mascaras.
December 1989/Stories include: Rhodes, Flair, Hogan-Zeus, Embry.
January 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Sting-Flair, Roberts-DiBiase.
February 1990/Stories include: Warriors-Skyscrapers, Zenk, Rude-Piper.
April 1990/Stories include: Starrcade '89, Ultimate, Rhodes, Sawyer.
May 1990/Stories include: Hogan-Ultimate, Luger, Woman, Lawler, LPWA.
June 1990/Stories include: Sting, Saito-Zbyszko, Earthquake, Ultimate, Jarrett.

July 1990/Stories include: Steiners, Sting, Warrior & Hogan, Earthquake.
August 1990/Stories include: Luger-Flair, Hogan, Warrior, Taylor.
September 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Duggan, JYD, Adams, Horsemen.
October 1990/Stories include: Sting, Legion of Doom, Bushwhackers, Gigante.
November 1990/Stories include: Flair, Hogan, Vicious, Slaughter, Orients.
Decembe r 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Sting, Kerry, Cornette, Zbyszko.
January 1991/Stories include: LOD, Adams, Steiners, Lawler-Funk.
February 1991/Stories include: Taylor, Hogan, Martel, Sting, all-annoying team.
March 1991/Stories include: Hogan-Earthquake, Roberts-Martel, Sting.
April 1991/Stories include: Flair-Sting, Steiners, Piper, Zbyszko, Slaughter.
May 1991/Stories include: Savage-Warrior, Steiners, Sting, Virgil.
June 1991/Stories include: Steiners, LOD, Koloff, I-C belt, Dundees.
July 1991/Stories include: Hogan, Virgil, Funk, Nastys, Steiners, Spivey.
August 1991/Stories include: Warrior-Undertaker, Steiners, Flair, Steamboat.
September 1991/Stories include: Justice-Hogan, Hyatt, Rude, Hennig.
October 1991/Stories include: Savage & Liz, Hogan & Warrior, Luger.
November 1991/Stories include: Hogan-Savage, Luger, Flair, War Games.
December 1991/Stories include: SummerSlam, York, Simmons.
January 1992/Stories include: Sting, Freebirds, Hart, Rhodes, Rotundo.
February 1992/Stories include: Luger, Hart, Patriot, Rude, Thesz-Rogers.
March 1992/Stories include: Hogan-Flair, Steiners, Badd, Survivor Series.
April 1992/Stories include: Hart, Steiners, Liger-Pillman, Roberts.
May 1992/Stories include: Justice-Hogan, Liger, Gilbert, Repo Man.
June 1992/Stories include: Sting, Hogan, Race, M.A. Bagwell, Atlas.
July 1992/Stories include: Undertaker, Vader, Sherri/Michaels, Madusa.
August 1992/Stories include: Savage-Flair, Jack-Badd, Christopher, LOD.
September 1992/Stories include: War Games, Hogan, Vader, Kamala.
October 1992/Stories include: SummerSlam, Steiner-Muta, Simmons.
November 1992/Stories include: Flair, Warrior, Vader, top rope rule.
December 1992/Stories include: Flair, Ramon, Heavenly Bodies, Jarrett.

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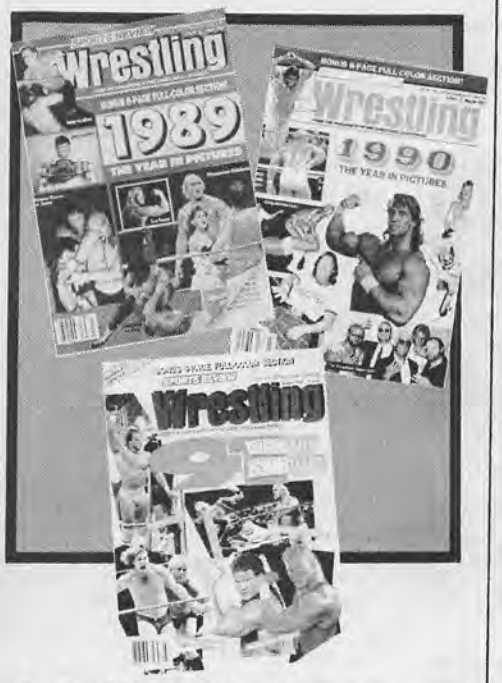
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DRESSING ROOM DOOR

(Continued from page 12)

and in the Battlebowl if he won his Lethal Lottery match—but Sting also knew there was a chance he'd only wrestle twice.

There was no way to prepare for the upcoming evening.

So Sting slept.

Finally, he was jarred from his sleep by a phone call, this one from WCW Vice President Bill Watts. It turned out to be an important call.

"That was Mr. Watts," Sting said as he hung up. "It looks like Rude's out of the World title match against Ron and they wanted to know if I wanted it. That was the question you heard me answering, 'no' to."

And, just like that, after refusing the chance to regain the WCW World title he covets so, Sting walked into the kitchen and prepared lunch for two: pasta, salad, a loaf of fresh bread, and plenty of bottled water.

"Let's not talk about it," Sting said as we sat down to eat. "Ron's my friend. I'm too geared for Vader and Battlebowl. That should be enough."

Watts' phone call distracted us from the real purpose of this visit: to find out how a top wrestler deals with the prospect of wrestling three times in one card on a federation's biggest pay-per-view card of the year.

As it turned out, there was nothing special about Sting's preparation. One would've thought he had the day off from an ordinary 9 to 5 job and was simply taking it easy: relaxing, watching TV, and eating right. Very right.

"I always eat like this," Sting said. "Yeah, I betcha right now Cactus Jack is stuffing fried chicken and mashed potatoes down his gullet, but he's never been World champion. Besides, I don't feel like I'm paying a price. I feel like I'm helping myself live a longer and more satisfying life."

As the afternoon wore on, Sting became a little more edgy and itchy. At 4 p.m., two hours before he was scheduled to arrive at The Omni, Sting threw on a pair of cross-trainers and a light jacket and announced, "Let's go. I'm tired of hanging around here."

He obviously needed to smell the arena, the locker room, and the anticipation of a big card.



For Sting, there isn't much to do the day of a big match except sit around and kill time.

Sting was ready for Starrcade.

And, of course, it turned out his preparation was for a very good reason. In the fourth Lethal Lottery match of the night, Sting teamed with Steve Williams and defeated Eric Watts and Jushin Liger. That was a tough match for Williams, too, because two matches later he was scheduled to wrestle Simmons for the WCW World title.

"Neither of us wanted to kill ourselves," Sting said. "But at the same time, we're both intense competitors and we both wanted to win. Besides, I'm the defending Battlebowl champion and I want to keep that ring."

It took 9:07 for Williams to pin Watts. Afterward, Sting and Williams shook hands, but they walked back to different locker rooms.

"I've always had tremendous admiration for Doc," Sting said. "I honestly think there's more good in him than bad."

Sting watched on the dressing room TV monitor as Masa Chono defeated The Great Muta and Simmons won by DQ over Williams. He again became irritable during the World tag title match, in which Shane Douglas and Rick Steamboat defeated Barry Windham and Brian Pillman.

He paced the hallways, made a phone call, and then, finally, Sting was summoned for his King of Cable match against Big Van Vader.

"Really, all day, this is the match I've been thinking about," Sting said. "A few days ago I couldn't have said this was the most important match, but now I know that it is."

Who could've guessed what Sting was thinking all day? Who could've known that Sting's incredible strategy for countering Big Van Vader's power would be to absorb every ounce of punishment Vader handed out? Who could've guessed that Sting would use the ol' Muhammad Ali rope-a-dope in a wrestling match?

That's exactly what happened. Vader pounded. Sting took the punishment and waited for his break. Finally, with 17:13 gone, Sting caught Vader off the ropes and rolled him up for a small package.

It was a satisfying win for Sting, but he had no time to enjoy it. Battlebowl was next.

Unfortunately for Sting, his day ended with a loss. With 7:52 gone, Sting and Vader were both eliminated. Sting's day was over.

"But it was a good day. I won the match that really counted and I have this beautiful ring," Sting said, showing off the Battlebowl '91 ring that was presented to him before the first match. "A good day. Now I'm gonna get some sleep." □

THE COMPLETE DRESSING ROOM DOOR FROM FEBRUARY 1993

RICK STEINER IS going stir crazy. His ride is about an hour late and, to make matters worse, he's been cooped up in his Atlanta, Georgia, apartment for the past two days. Rest the shoulder and the torn pectoral, the doctor said. Give it time, the doctor said.

"*Aww*, that's it!" Rick Steiner finally said. "I'm going to the mall."

But driving was impossible under his condition and Steiner had to count on a friend. Nice friend. How could anyone keep Rick Steiner waiting in his time of need?

Well, Steiner's going to be waiting and waiting and waiting. By the time it's all over, he'll have waited about 12 weeks before doctors clear him for a return to the ring. Figure another month after that until Rick is in top wrestling shape and, with his brother Scott, ready to challenge for a world tag team title.

Until then . . . boredom.

Week three of Rick Steiner's 12-week injury-imposed exile from wrestling was passing very slowly. Any time away from the ring passes very slowly for the loveable fan favorite.

"Wrestling's my life," Steiner said. "Besides, the way I see it, a man only has so many peak years, ya know? I feel like I'm wasting three months of my peak years just by not being able to wrestle. Damn, it makes me mad."

Rick tore his right pectoral muscle on September 23 in Yokohama, Japan. He and Scott were defending their IWGP tag team championship against Hiroshi Hase and Kensuke Sasaki when Rick tore the muscle while delivering a "Steinerline" clothesline to Sasaki. The Steiners won the match, but lost the war.

"They say adversity makes you a better man," Rick said. "The heck with adversity. I liked me the way I was."

Luck, however, has not been with the Steiners for the past few years. In 1991, Scott was sidelined for over three months with a torn bicep. The Steiners were stripped of the WCW World tag team title because of their inability to defend the belts.

So far there's no news on the IWGP belts, but the Steiners were IWGP champions when Scott was injured last year, and they were allowed to keep the belts.

"You know, it seems like something always happens to one of us when things are going good," Rick said. "Why can't we get hurt when we don't have a title? And how come these injuries are always major? We never get little cuts and bruises."

Of course, the scars on Rick's face prove that the Steiners, like all other wrestlers, *do* get minor cuts and bruises. But rarely are the Steiners sidelined for a day or two. It's always a month . . . or two . . . or three or four.

There's a good reason the Steiners do suffer serious injuries. They are a high-risk tag team that attempts many difficult maneuvers. They wrestle non-stop instead of pacing themselves during a match, and believe in never taking a step backward.

That takes its toll. Eventually there'll be that scary ripping and tearing that takes place in the bodies of all great athletes.

"I heard it when it happened," Scott said. "I didn't have time to talk to Rick, but I gave him a look like, *Do you want stop?* But I knew he wouldn't. In retrospect, maybe he should have."

Actually, a WCW doctor told me the damage was done on the clothesline, and Rick probably (luckily) didn't cause further damage to the muscles. Ringside observers say Rick was noticeably grimacing for the rest of the match, and Scott tried to handle as much of the action as possible.

Rick's injury gave Scott another opportunity to display his ability as a singles wrestler. Scott beat Rick Steamboat for the WCW TV title, and his only regret was that Rick wasn't at ringside for the match.

Of course not. Rick was home. Going crazy. Playing video games (WrestleMania, perhaps?), watching TV, and trying to avoid delicious snack foods.

Waiting for a ride. But the ride never came.

Nice friend.

***

The sad story of the Von Erichs continued in October, and reached a new low with the sentencing of Kerry Von Erich on six counts of prescription forgery. He received a 10-year suspended sentence, 10 years of probation, and a $1,000 fine on each count for a total of $6,000.

He won't spend any time in jail, but he'll spend at least 10 years if he violates his probation and commits any crime.

I'll let you make the connection between Kerry's crime and the deaths of his brothers, Mike and David. This is no time for lessons, but it is critically important for people to learn from the mistakes of others. The Von Erichs make the same mistakes over and over again.

You know, my heart used to bleed for Doris and Fritz Von Erich, but I don't feel the same way anymore. This is Kerry's problem, and his future is up to him.

Kerry Von Erich doesn't deserve our sympathy, but he does deserves our hopes. □

ON ASSIGNMENT

(Continued from page 16)

belt and still not believe it. I didn't feel like I thought other champions felt. I didn't have that superior attitude that makes losing inconceivable."

What allowed Simmons to finally believe his clippings?

"I was checking out the rankings one day," he smiled, "and silently checking off those opponents who give me special trouble. It's something I've done my whole career. As I do it, I imagine myself wrestling the toughest ones and trying to figure out ways to win. This time, I went through the entire rankings—more than 60 wrestlers in all federations—and didn't make one check mark. I knew then I had arrived."

Three weeks later, Big Van Vader pinned Simmons to capture his second WCW World championship.



Jerry Lawler told Liz he was content in Memphis, then he took a job with the WWF.

To travel Memphis with Jerry Lawler is to see Memphis the way it was meant to be seen. Wherever we went, we were treated like royalty: hurried into VIP sections, ushered ahead of long restaurant lines, and generally getting the hero's welcome to which Lawler has grown accustomed. We finished the night at one of Lawler's many "regular" spots, where "The King" was comfortable and in a very expansive mood.

"I've been thinking about my career lately," he said, his feet up on the table. "I wouldn't do a thing different. Not a thing."

I knew Lawler was responding to the criticism that's hounded him and many other wrestlers who never strayed far from their hometown. What would his career have been like if left Memphis during the times when he wasn't AWA World champion? Could he have been good enough to reign in the WWF or WCW? What are a dozen USWA titles worth, anyway?

"I'll show you what they're worth," he said, sitting up and serious. He snapped his fingers, to no one in particular, and immediately a man appeared from the shadows.

"Can I help you, Mr. Lawler?" "The King" was asked.

"No, no thanks, Bill," Jerry responded. "I was just checking. Thank you."

Lawler turned to me. "No matter who you are, you have to live your life. I chose to live it here, and live it well. I know I've chosen correctly. If I had gone to the WWF—and believe me, I had so many offers over the years I couldn't tell you—my life would not have been mine. I would be another puppet, a new toy for those East Coast boys to spit and chew out. Here, I have power. There, I would be doing their bidding, and that's something Jerry Lawler simply won't do."

Two weeks later, Lawler announced he had taken the job as co-host of *WWF Superstars Of Wrestling* and *Prime Time Wrestling.*

I was beginning to consider myself a bad luck charm until I talked to Kerry Von Erich following a wild double-disqualification brawl he fought against his brother's old nemesis, Black Bart.

"It feels *so* good to be back, Liz," Kerry gushed, sounding very much like the "Modern-Day Warrior" of old. "I'm paying attention to my body and spirit very carefully, and so far it's full steam ahead. I don't see why I can't regain all my old skills and add a few dozen. I feel great."

Three weeks later, Kerry defeated Mr. Wrestling III for the United States Wrestling Federation title.

And I breathed a big sigh of relief. □

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THE INSIDER

(Continued from page 14)



In matches like this bullrope contest with Lex Luger at Starrcade '90, Hansen has suffered dozens of injuries. He prides himself on fighting through the pain.

breath I take, it feels like someone is sticking a knife in my side."

The boys stared in stark amazement. Hansen grabbed Jason's hand and ran it over the rib. "Jeez," the youngster gaped. "It hurts just to touch it."

"You betcha it does," Hansen said. "Try bodyslamming Scott Steiner and you'll know the meaning of pain. But this don't figure into your little equations, I bet. There's no accounting for variables when you're tracking wins and losses, is there?

"See this finger?" Hansen continued. "Been broke so many times it can't set itself—ever! It just hangs, like a piece of snot from your nose. Do your numbers tell you about that?"

This time, Hansen wanted a response.

"Well, *do they*?" he screamed.

"No, no sir," Andrew mumbled. "I guess they don't." Daniel and Jason turned a whiter shade of pale.

Hansen's fierce countenance softened. He put his shirt on. "Sit down, boys."

The boys sat.

"You see, wrestlers ain't like other athletes. In basketball and baseball, even in football nowadays, a fella gets a little nick on his toenail and he won't play. Of course, there *are* exceptions. Athletes by and large are tough men. But those boys in the other sports are making so much damned money they forget what the game is supposed to be about."

Hansen leaned forward; the boys hung on his every word.

"The game's about *playing.* No matter what. So before you start ho-humming my record, you got to know the man behind it. You got to know the particulars. Us wrestlers get migraine headaches, we wrestle. A broke nose? Big deal. Twisted ligaments? Tape 'em up and push me into the ring."

Mr. Maskin burst into the room. Hansen's nod told him everything was in order. "I suspect the same holds true for your daddy. He got

a case to argue, he goes to court. Ain't no calling in sick, 'cause this is the big leagues. He may wish he felt better, same way I wish my rib would heal itself. But when we leave our rings, we have no excuses. We're paid to perform to the best of our abilities, and that's what we do."

Mr. Maskin nodded as his boys beamed proud smiles.

"I'm not going to tell you every wrestler is like me," Hansen continued. "You got prima donnas in every profession, even picking up your garbage in the morning. But those guys don't last long. I make sure of that."

Hansen winked at the boys. With great effort, he lifted himself from his seat and moved toward the door. "It was nice making your acquaintance," he said. "I'll see ya at the matches."

"Excuse me, Mr. Hansen," said Andrew sheepishly. "Could I have your autograph?"

The room fell silent. Hansen never signs autographs, and has been known to Cuisinart those who request one from him. Quietly, he signed each boy's program.

"He's a great man," Jason Shaeffer said on his way out. "I'll never forget this day."

"I think Hansen would be one of the greatest wrestlers in the world if he had a manager," Daniel Maskin offered. "Someone to handle his affairs. I know—why don't *you* do it, Dad?" Mr. Maskin laughed, though the idea was one you could tell he was already considering.

Andrew was silent, staring at his precious autograph. I asked him what he was going to do with the autograph.

"Are you nuts?" he asked. "I'm gonna laminate it and put in the vault. Hansen never signs autographs. This sucker'll be worth big bucks in 10 years."

That came from a lawyer's kid. What can you expect? □

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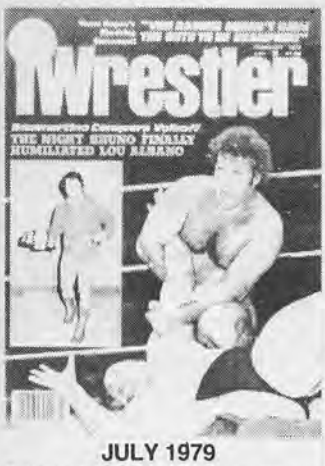
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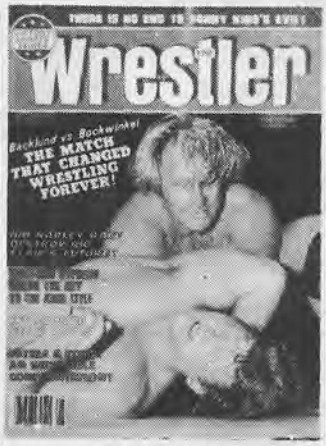
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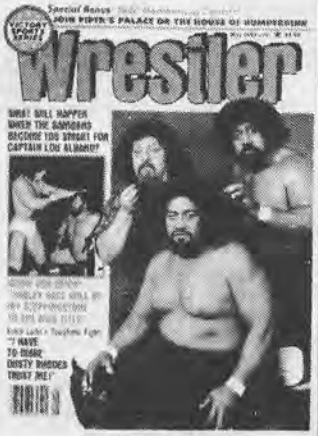
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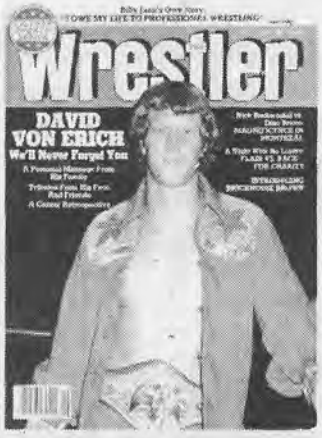
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September 1982/Stories include: Rhodes, Hogan, Armstrong, Blair.
October 1982/Stories include: Snuka, Rhodes, Santana, Piper.
November 1982/Stories include: Flair, Snuka, Piper, Blair.
December 1982/Stories include: Snuka, Rich, Kamala, Junkyard Dog.
January 1983/Stories include: Putski, Muraco, Windham, Bockwinkel.
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April 1983/Stories include: Rhodes, Tiger Mask, Sammartino, Bundy.
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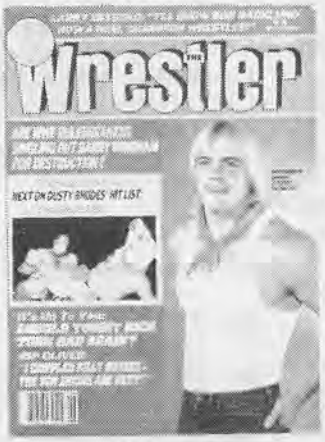
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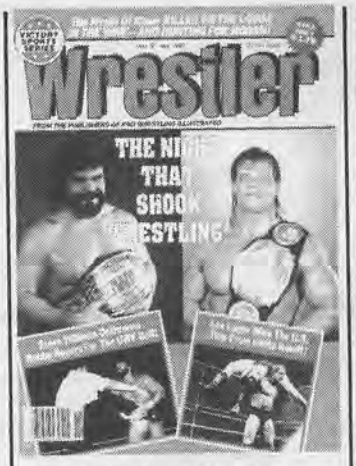
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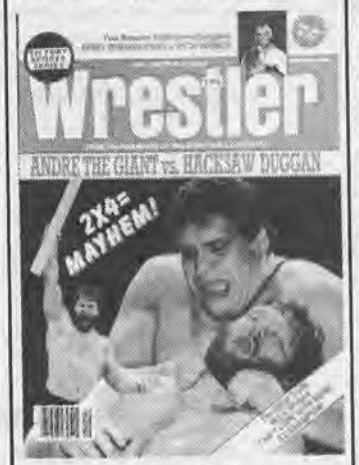
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January 1988/Stories include: Nikita-Taylor, Warriors, DiBiase-Duggan.
February 1988/Stories include: Flair, Andre-Hogan, New Breed, Kerry.
March 1988/Stories include: Hogan, Luger-Sting, Calgary, Demolition.
April 1988/Stories include: Bonus 4-page color section! Starrcade, Survivor Series, World Class.
May 1988/Stories include: Horsemen, Hogan, Flair, Fantastics, DiBiase.
June 1988/Stories include: Sting-Flair, DiBiase, Kerry, Nikita, Zenk.
July 1988/Stories include: Fantastics, Hogan, Windham, McMahon, Rich.
August 1988/Stories include: Savage, Windham-Luger split, Demolition, Lawler, Ellering.
September 1988/Stories include: Duggan vs. Andre, Hogan, Windham.
October 1988/Stories include: Rhodes, Fantastics, Hennig, Roberts-Rude.
November 1988/Stories include: Midnight Ex., DiBiase, Bossman, Brody.
January 1989/Stories include: Kevin Von, Rougeaus, Horsemen, Hogan.

February 1989/Stories include: Warriors, Ultimate-Hogan, Bigelow-Gordy.
March 1989/Stories include: Jarrett, Flair, Jake-Andre, Bigelow-Windham.
April 1989/Stories include: Bulldogs, Warriors, Andre, Hogan-Savage.
May 1989/Stories include: Steamboat, Savage-Hogan, Dusty, Valentine.
June 1989/Stories include: Steamboat, Martel, Ultimate-Savage, Luger, Flair.
July 1989/Stories include: Warrior, Hogan-Bra-vo, Flair-Steamboat, Rhodes.
September 1989/Stories include: Flair-Funk, Piper, Demolition, Zeus.
October 1989/Stories include: Hogan & Beefcake vs. Zeus & Savage, Hyatt, Hayes, Long, Embry, WWF Horsemen.
November 1989/Stories include: Piper-Savage-Hogan, Dusty, Flair-Funk.
December 1989/Stories include: Muta-Sting, Andre-Ultimate, Windham.
January 1990/Stories include: Pillman, Hogan, Rich-Luger, Tully & Arn.
February 1990/Stories include: Sting-Luger, Gordy, Martel, Hogan-Brown.
March 1990/Stories include: Steiners, Flair-Funk, Hogan-Zeus, Survivors.



JULY 1989

April 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Luger, Woman, Piper-Heenan, Travis.
May 1990/Stories include: Sting & Ultimate, Bossman, Von Erichs, Hogan.
June 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Rockers, Koloffs, Horsemen, Flair-Luger.

July 1990/Stories include: Poffo, Dusty-Savage, Luger-Flair, Doom, Blanchard.
August 1990/Stories include: Hogan-Warrior, Embry, Demolition, Doom.
September 1990/Stories include: Ultimate, Haynes, Luger, Doom, Tugboat.
October 1990/Stories include: Hogan-Earthquake, Ultimate, Flair, Rich.
November 1990/Stories include: Luger & Sting, Beefcake, Race, Steiners.
January 1991/Stories include: Survivor Series, Sting, Beefcake, Flair, Woman.
February 1991/Stories include: Sting-Vicious, Muta-Steamboat, Warrior, Hogan.
March 1991/Stories include: Hogan-Warrior, Piper, Cornette, Steiners.
April 1991/Stories include: Hogan, DiBiase, Skyscrapers, Luger, Zenk.
May 1991/Stories include: Hogan-Slaughter, Flair, Eaton, Sheik-Bobo.
June 1991/Stories include: Hogan, Nastys, Sting, Flair, Cactus Jack.
July 1991/Stories include: Flair-Fujinami, Nastys, Steiners, Savage.
August 1991/Stories include: Slaughter, Luger-Nikita, Hennig, Poffo.
September 1991/Stories include: Steiners vs. Sting & Luger, LOD, Cactus.
November 1991/Stories include: Luger, Steamboat, Piper, Global.
December 1991/Stories include: Flair-Hogan, Beverlys, Sting-Luger.
January 1992/Stories include: LOD, Badd, Hughes, Roberts, Gossett.
February 1992/Stories include: Flair, Simmons, Santana, Backlund.
March 1992/Stories include: Pillman, WWF title, Rude, Mountie-Hart.
April 1992/Stories include: Bearer, WCW magic, Hennig & Flair, LPWA.
May 1992/Stories include: Flair, Anderson & Eaton, Piper, Rhodes, USWA.
June 1992/Stories include: Flair-Hogan-Justice, Gilbert, Warrior, Vegas.
July 1992/Stories include: Rude, LOD, Madusa, Monsoon, Nurse Vanessa.
August 1992/Stories include: Warrior, Bunkhouse, Undertaker-Roberts, Sting.
September 1992/Stories include: LOD, Repo vs. Crush, Kleen, Freebirds.
October 1992/Stories include: Bulldog & Warrior, Lee, Martel-Tatanka, Austin.
November 1992/Stories include: Crush, Reed, Hennig, Sting, Rogers.
December 1992/Stories include: Hogan, Roberts, Simmons, Rock 'n' Rolls.
January 1993/Stories include: Ramon-Savage, Sting-Roberts, Disasters.

☐ NOV 76 ☐ DEC 76 ☐ JAN 77 ☐ FEB 77 ☐ APR 77 ☐ MAY 77 ☐ JULY 77 ☐ NOV 77 ☐ DEC 78 ☐ JULY 79 ☐ AUG 79 ☐ SEPT 79 ☐ DEC 79 ☐ FEB 80 ☐ MAR 80 ☐ APR 80 ☐ JUNE 80 ☐ AUG 80 ☐ SEPT 80 ☐ FEB 81 ☐ JUNE 81 ☐ JULY 81 ☐ AUG 81 ☐ OCT 81 ☐ JAN 82 ☐ MAR 82 ☐ APR 82 ☐ MAY 82 ☐ JUNE 82 ☐ JULY 82 ☐ AUG 82 ☐ SEPT 82 ☐ OCT 82 ☐ NOV 82 ☐ DEC 82 ☐ JAN 83 ☐ FEB 83 ☐ APR 83

☐ MAY 83 ☐ JUNE 83 ☐ JULY 83 ☐ AUG 83 ☐ SEPT 83 ☐ OCT 83 ☐ NOV 83 ☐ DEC 83 ☐ MAR 84 ☐ APR 84 ☐ MAY 84 ☐ JUNE 84 ☐ JULY 84 ☐ SEPT 84 ☐ OCT 84 ☐ NOV 84 ☐ DEC 84 ☐ JAN 85 ☐ FEB 85 ☐ MAR 85 ☐ APR 85 ☐ MAY 85 ☐ JUNE 85 ☐ JULY 85 ☐ AUG 85 ☐ SEPT 85 ☐ OCT 85 ☐ NOV 85 ☐ DEC 85 ☐ FEB 86 ☐ MAR 86 ☐ APR 86 ☐ MAY 86 ☐ JUNE 86 ☐ JULY 86 ☐ AUG 86 ☐ SEPT 86 ☐ OCT 86

☐ NOV 86 ☐ DEC 86 ☐ JAN 87 ☐ FEB 87 ☐ MAR 87 ☐ APR 87 ☐ MAY 87 ☐ JUNE 87 ☐ JULY 87 ☐ AUG 87 ☐ SEPT 87 ☐ OCT 87 ☐ NOV 87 ☐ DEC 87 ☐ JAN 88 ☐ FEB 88 ☐ MAR 88 ☐ MAY 88 ☐ JUNE 88 ☐ JULY 88 ☐ AUG 88 ☐ SEPT 88 ☐ OCT 88 ☐ NOV 88 ☐ JAN 89 ☐ FEB 89 ☐ MAR 89 ☐ APR 89 ☐ MAY 89 ☐ JUNE 89 ☐ JULY 89 ☐ SEPT 89 ☐ OCT 89 ☐ NOV 89 ☐ DEC 89 ☐ JAN 90 ☐ FEB 90 ☐ MAR 90

☐ APR 90 ☐ MAY 90 ☐ JUNE 90 ☐ JULY 90 ☐ AUG 90 ☐ SEPT 90 ☐ OCT 90 ☐ NOV 90 ☐ JAN 91 ☐ FEB 91 ☐ MAR 91 ☐ APR 91 ☐ MAY 91 ☐ JUNE 91 ☐ JULY 91 ☐ AUG 91 ☐ SEPT 91 ☐ NOV 91 ☐ DEC 91 ☐ JAN 92 ☐ FEB 92 ☐ MAR 92 ☐ APR 92 ☐ MAY 92 ☐ JUNE 92 ☐ JULY 92 ☐ AUG 92 ☐ SEPT 92 ☐ OCT 92 ☐ NOV 92 ☐ DEC 92 ☐ JAN 93 ☐ FEB 93 ☐ APR 93

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INSIDE WRESTLING'S OFFICIAL RATINGS

TOP 15

1—**BRET HART**
(1) WWF World champion

2—**BIG VAN VADER**
(-) WCW World champion

3—**SHAWN MICHAELS**
(4) WWF I-C champion

4—**RAZOR RAMON**
(7) No. 2 contender: WWF title

5—**TONY ANTHONY**
(6) Smoky Mountain champion

6—**ROD PRICE**
(11) Global N.A. champion

7—**JERRY LAWLER**
(-) USWA champion

8—**JEFF JARRETT**
(-) USWA Southern champion

9—**RON SIMMONS**
(1) No. 1 contender: WCW title

10—**STING**
(10) No. 1 contender: U.S. title

11—**STEVE WILLIAMS**
(-) No. 2 contender: WCW title

12—**MARTY JANNETTY**
(-) No. 1 contender: I-C title

13—**MANNY VILLALOBOS**
(-) Global TV champion

14—**TIM HORNER**
(-) No. 1 contender: SMW title

15—**THE SANDMAN**
(-) ECW champion

WCW

1—**BIG VAN VADER**
(-) 404, Denver, CO

2—**RON SIMMONS**
(1) 260, Warner Robins, GA

3—**STING**
(3) 260, Venice Beach, CA

4—**STEVE WILLIAMS**
(-) 265, Norman, OK

5—**RICK STEAMBOAT**
(-) 238, Honolulu, HI

6—**BARRY WINDHAM**
(6) 263, Sweetwater, TX

7—**DUSTIN RHODES**
(-) 254, Austin, TX

8—**CACTUS JACK**
(9) 304, Truth or Cons., NM

9—**THE BARBARIAN**
(7) 295, New York, NY

10—**2 COLD SCORPIO**
(-) 239, Denver, CO

11—**BRIAN PILLMAN**
(15) 229, Cincinnati, OH

12—**PAUL ORNDORFF**
(10) 253, Brandon, FL

13—**STEVE AUSTIN**
(13) 241, Dallas, TX

14—**ERIK WATTS**
(12) 262, Oklahoma City, OK

15—**VAN HAMMER**
(8) 290, New York, NY

WWF

1—**BRET HART**
(1) 235, Calgary, Alberta

2—**SHAWN MICHAELS**
(2) 220, San Antonio, TX

3—**RAZOR RAMON**
(3) 291, Minneapolis, MN

4—**MARTY JANNETTY**
(-) 230, Columbia, GA

5—**UNDERTAKER**
(6) 320, Dallas, TX

6—**RIC FLAIR**
(12) 243, Minneapolis, MN

7—**BOB BACKLUND**
(4) 242, Princeton, MN

8—**TATANKA**
(8) 260, Miami, FL

9—**BIG BOSSMAN**
(14) 287, Cobb County, GA

10—**CURT HENNIG**
(-) 235, Minneapolis, MN

11—**SKINNER**
(-) 236, Tampa, FL

12—**RANDY SAVAGE**
(9) 245, Sarasota, FL

13—**KAMALA**
(11) 360, Uganda

14—**PAPA SHANGO**
(5) 340, parts unknown

15—**CRUSH**
(13) 310, Honolulu, HI

MOST POPULAR

1—**STING**
Last month: No. 2 Most Popular

2—**BRET HART**
Last month: No. 1 Most Popular

3—**THE UNDERTAKER**
Last month: No. 7 Most Popular

4—**RON SIMMONS**
Last month: No. 3 Most Popular

5—**RANDY SAVAGE**
Last month: No. 5 Most Popular

6—**RICK STEAMBOAT**
Last month: No. 6 Most Popular

7—**CRUSH**
Last month: No. 9 Most Popular

8—**JEFF JARRETT**
Last month: No. 10 Most Popular

9—**TATANKA**
Last month: No. 12 Most Popular

10—**JOHNNY B. BADD**
Last month: unrated

11—**BOB BACKLUND**
Last month: No. 11 Most Popular

12—**VAN HAMMER**
Last month: No. 13 Most Popul

13—**MIKE DAVIS**
Last month: No. 10 Most Hated

14—**TIM HORNER**
Last month: unrated

15—**CARLOS COLON**
Last month: unrated

MOST HATED

1—**BARRY WINDHAM**
Last month: No. 5 Most Hated

2—**SHAWN MICHAELS**
Last month: No. 2 Most Hated

3—**RAZOR RAMON**
Last month: No. 4 Most Hated

4—**RICK RUDE**
Last month: No. 1 Most Hated

5—**CACTUS JACK**
Last month: No. 3 Most Hated

6—**TONY ANTHONY**
Last month: No. 7 Most Hated

7—**RIC FLAIR**
Last month: No. 6 Most Hated

8—**KEVIN SULLIVAN**
Last month: unrated

9—**BRIAN CHRISTOPHER**
Last month: No. 11 Most Hated

10—**ROD PRICE**
Last month: No. 12 Most Hated

11—**STEVE WILLIAMS**
Last month: unrated

12—**BRIAN PILLMAN**
Last month: unrated

13—**THE BARBARIAN**
Last month: No. 9 Most Hated

14—**YOKOZUNA**
Last month: unrated

15—**BIG VAN VADER**
Last month: unrated

TAG TEAMS

1—**RICK STEAMBOAT & SHANE DOUGLAS**
(2) WCW World tag team champions

2—**IRWIN R. SCHYSTER & TED DiBIASE**
(1) WWF World tag team champions

3—**THE NASTY BOYS**
(11) No. 3 contenders: WWF tag title

4—**BARRY WINDHAM & BRIAN PILLMAN**
(-) No. 1 contenders: WCW tag title

5—**THE HEADSHRINKERS**
(-) No. 2 contenders: WWF tag team title

6—**RON & DON HARRIS**
(14) USWA tag team champions

7—**THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS**
(5) Smoky Mountain tag team champions

8—**CACTUS JACK & THE BARBARIAN**
(-) No. 2 contenders: WCW tag team title

9—**JOHNNY GUNN & TOM ZENK**
(-) No. 3 contenders: WCW tag title

10—**JOHN HAWK & BOBBY DUNCUM JR.**
(-) Global tag team champions

11—**SHANGHAI PIERCE & TEX SLAZENGER**
(10) No. 4 contenders: WCW tag team title

12—**THE MOONDOGS**
(4) No. 1 contenders: USWA tag team title

13—**THE BEVERLY BROTHERS**
(12) No. 3 contenders: WWF tag team title

14—**THE MASTERS OF TERROR**
(-) No. 2 contenders: USWA tag title

15—**MOHAMMAD HUSSEIN & EL VIGILANTE**
(-) WWC tag team champions

These ratings are compiled by the editors with the assistance of promoters, wrestlers, and reporters around the country, and are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue . . . "Most Popular" and "Most Hated" ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and on mail that comes to our offices . . . Championships marked with asterisks on the "Roll Call of Champions" indicate title changes that have taken place since our previous issue . . . The information under the championship listing indicates the date that champion won the title, who the former champion was, and where the match took place.

For period ended January 7, 1993

ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS

ALL-JAPAN ASIAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: KENTA KOBASHI & TSUYOSHI AIKUCHI
(May 25, 1992; from Dan Kroffat & Doug Furnas; Miyago, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: MITSUHARA MISAWA
(August 22, 1992; from Stan Hansen; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MASANOBU FUCHI
(October 20, 1989; from Joe Malenko; Nagoya, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: JUMBO TSURUTA & AKIRA TAUE
(March 4, 1992; from Steve Williams & Terry Gordy; Tokyo, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPION: MITSUHARA MISAWA
(August 22, 1992; from Stan Hansen; Tokyo, Japan)

* **ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S CHAMPION: KAORU ITO**
(November 26, 1992; from Tomoko Watanabe; Kawasaki, Japan)

* **ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: AJA KONG**
(November 26, 1992; from Bull Nakano; Kawasaki, Japan)

* **ALL JAPAN WOMEN'S PACIFIC CHAMPION: AKIRA HOKUTO**
(November 26, 1992; from Kyoko Inoue; Kawasaki, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: MINAMI TOYOTA & TOSHYO YAMADA
(March 20, 1992; from Aja Kong & Bison Kimura; Tokyo, Japan)

* **CATCH WRESTLING ASSOCIATION CHAMPION: HAWK**
(December 20, 1992; from Rambo; Bremen, Germany)

CATCH WRESTLING ASSOCIATION EUROPEAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
MAD BULL BUSTER & LARRY CAMERON
(July 11, 1992; for vacant title over Miles Zmo & Steve Regal; Graz, Austria)

CATCH WRESTLING ASSOCIATION INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: TATSUMI FUJINAMI
(July 11, 1992; from Bob Orton Jr. for vacant title; Graz, Austria)

CATCH WRESTLING ASSOCIATION MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPION: VACANT
(Most recently held by Dave Finlay)

ECW CHAMPION: THE SANDMAN
(November 16, 1992; from Don Muraco; Philadelphia, PA)

ECW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: SUPER DESTROYERS
(June 23, 1992; tournament final over Night Breed, Philadelphia, PA)

GLWA CHAMPION: IVAN KOLOFF
(July 11, 1992; from Psycho Mike; Willowick, OH)

GWF LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MIKE DAHL
(October 23, 1992; from Alex Porteau; Dallas, TX)

GWF NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPION: ROD PRICE
(August 21, 1992; by forfeit from Scott Putski; Dallas, TX)

* **GWF TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: JOHN HAWK & BOB DUNCUM JR.**
(November 27, 1991; from The Rough Riders; Dallas, TX)

* **GWF TV CHAMPION: MANNY VILLALOBOS**
(November 27, 1992; from Mike Davis, Dallas, TX)

IWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: VLADIMIR KOLOFF
(October 17, 1992; battle royal final over Thunderfoot II; Girard, OH)

IWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TITLE HELD UP
(Most recently held by The Thunderfoots)

IWA U.S. CHAMPION: PRESTON STEELE
(July 14, 1991; from Jules Strongbow; Sydney, Australia)

IWA WOMEN'S CHAMPION: BAMBI
(March 25, 1990; from Peggy Lee Leather; Palmetto, FL)

IWCCW LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: JOE SAVOLDI
(December 26; 1991; from The Tasmaniac; Monticello, NY)

IWCCW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE SIOUX WAR PARTY
(May 9, 1992; tournament final over The Canadians; Hamburg, PA)

IWF CHAMPION: BLACKJACK MULLIGAN
(February 28, 1992; from Mondo Kleen; Orlando, FL)

IWF TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE LONGRIDERS
(February 8, 1992; from The Heartbreakers; Orlando, FL)

IWGP CHAMPION: THE GREAT MUTA
(August 16, 1992; from Riki Choshu; Fukuoka, Japan)

* **IWGP INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: KENSUKE SASAKI & HAWK**
(December 14, 1992; from Scott Norton & Tony Halme; Osaka, Japan)

* **IWGP JR. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: JUSHIN LIGER**
(January 4, 1993; from Ultimo Dragon, Tokyo, Japan)

LPWA CHAMPION: TERRI POWER
(February 23, 1992; from Lady X; Rochester, MN)

LPWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: JUDY MARTIN & LELANI KAI
(February 28, 1991; from Misty Blue Simmes & Heidi Lee Morgan; Laughlin, NV)

NEW ZEALAND CHAMPION: BRUNO BEKKAR
(December 12, 1987; from Johnny Garcia; Auckland, New Zealand)

* **NWA CHAMPION: THE GREAT MUTA**
(January 4, 1993; from Masahiro Chono; Tokyo, Japan)

NWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: RICK STEAMBOAT & SHANE DOUGLAS
(November 18, 1992; from Barry Windham & Dustin Rhodes; Macon, GA)

PWA CHAMPION: THE HATER
(October 20, 1992; from Charlie Norris; Minneapolis, MN)

PWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: LIGHTNING KID & JERRY LYNN
(September 28, 1992; for held up title over Tony DeNucci & Tommy Ferrara; Fridley, MN)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION CHAMPION: MITSUHARA MISAWA
(August 22, 1992; from Stan Hansen; Tokyo, Japan)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
JUMBO TSURUTA & AKIRA TAUE
(March 4, 1992; from Steve Williams & Terry Gordy; Tokyo, Japan)

PWF HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: ITALIAN STALLION
(July 7, 1990; from Russian Assassin; War, WV)

PWF JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: GEORGE SOUTH
(June 15, 1991; tournament final; Charlotte, NC)

PWF TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: STAR RYDER & FLAMING YOUTH
(November 12, 1992; from Cruel Connection; Princeton, WV)

SAPW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: NEIL SUPERIOR
(January 11, 1992; from Helmut Hesler; Hagerstown, MD)

SAPW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE RINGLORDS
(July 24, 1992; from Rob Van Dam & Chazz Rocco; Clover, SC)

SMOKY MT. HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TONY ANTHONY
(August 8, 1992; from Brian Lee; Johnson City, TN)

SMOKY MT. TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE ROCK & ROLL EXPRESS
(November 26, 1992; from The Heavenly Bodies; Knoxville, TN)

SUPER WORLD SPORTS TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: YOSHIAKI YATSU & HAKU
(April 18, 1992; from Earthquake & Typhoon; Tokyo, Japan)

USWA CHAMPION: JERRY LAWLER
(December 14, 1992; from Todd Champion; Memphis, TN)

* **USWA SOUTHERN CHAMPION: JEFF JARRETT**
(December 21, 1992; from Brian Christopher; Memphis, TN)

* **USWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: RON & DON HARRIS**
(December 28, 1992; from The Moondogs; Memphis,TN)

UWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: EL CANEK
(July 5, 1992; from Dos Caras; Naucalpcan, Mexico)

UWF INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: NOBUHIKO TAKADA
(September 21, 1992; from Gary Albright; Osaka, Japan)

WCW U.S. CHAMPION: RICK RUDE
(November 19, 1991; from Sting; Savannah, GA)

* **WCW WORLD CHAMPION: BIG VAN VADER**
(December 30, 1992; from Ron Simmons; Baltimore, MD)

WCW WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: RICK STEAMBOAT & SHANE DOUGLAS
(November 19, 1992; from Barry Windham & Dustin Rhodes; Macon, GA)

WWA FRONTIER MARTIAL ARTS CHAMPION: MR. ONITA
(September 19, 1992; from Tiger Jeet Singh; Yokohama, Japan)

WWA FRONTIER MARTIAL ARTS TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TARZAN GOTO & GREGORY VERITCHEV
(May 24, 1992; from Horace Boulder & Sabu; Tokyo, Japan)

* **WWC CARIBBEAN CHAMPION: YUKIHIORO KANEMURA**
(December 18, 1992; from Miguel Perez Jr.; Fukushima, Japan)

* **WWC TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: MOHAMMAD HUSSEIN & EL VIGILANTE**
(December 25, 1992; from Rex King & Ray Gonzalez; Bayamon, Puerto Rico)

WWC TV CHAMPION: DICK MURDOCH
(January 6, 1992; from Invader I; San Juan, Puerto Rico)

* **WWC UNIVERSAL CHAMPION: CARLOS COLON**
(November 28, 1992; from Dick Murdoch; Manati, Puerto Rico)

WWC WOMEN'S CHAMPION: SASHA
(November 21, 1992; over La Tigresa for vacant title; Caguas, Puerto Rico)

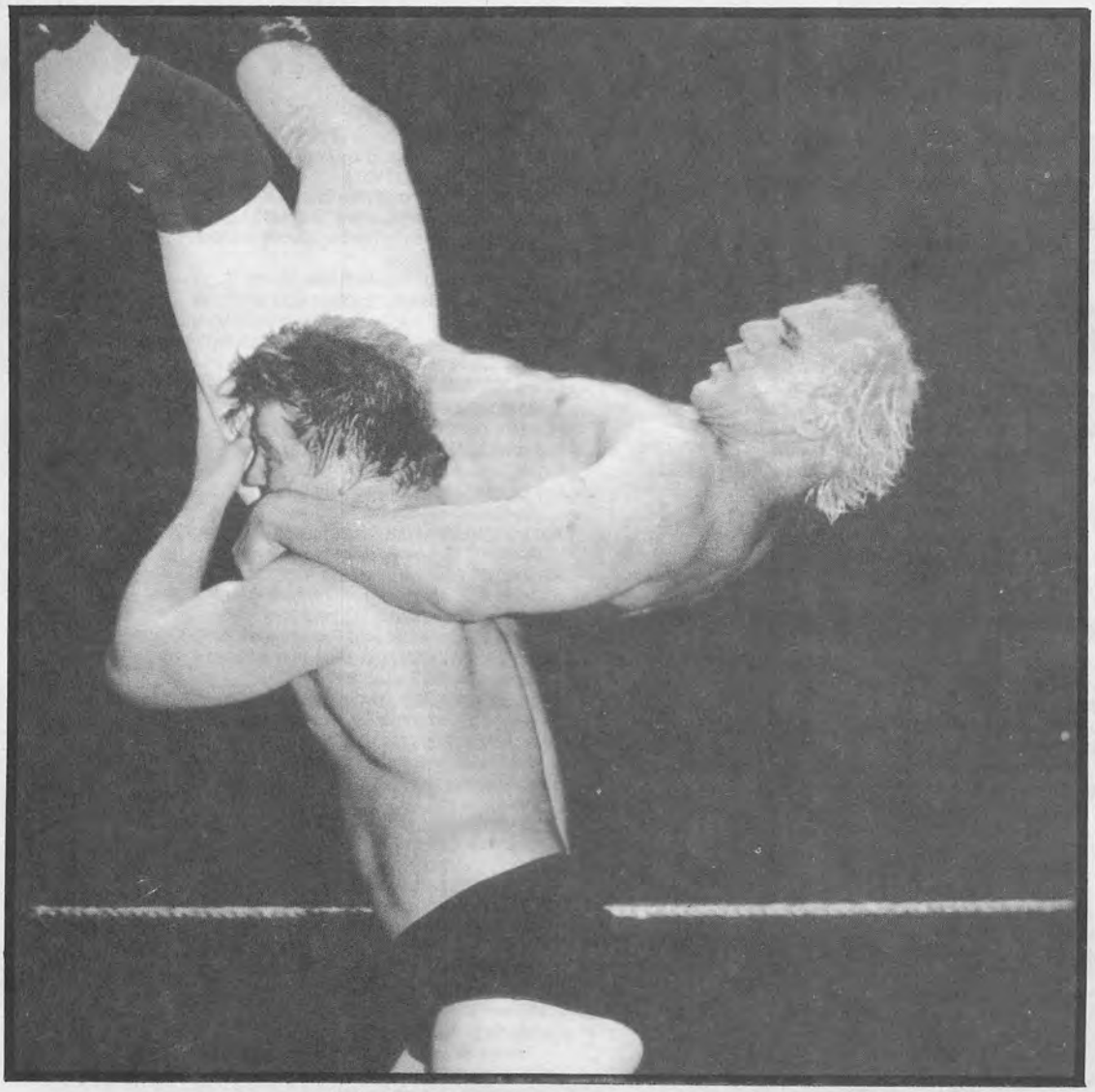
WWF INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: SHAWN MICHAELS
(October 27, 1992; from Davey Boy Smith; Terre Haute, IN)

WWF WORLD CHAMPION: BRET HART
(October 12, 1992; from Ric Flair; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

WWF WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: MONEY INC.
(October 13, 1992; from The Natural Disasters; Regina, Saskatchewan)

BLAST FROM THE PAST
This Month In Wrestling History

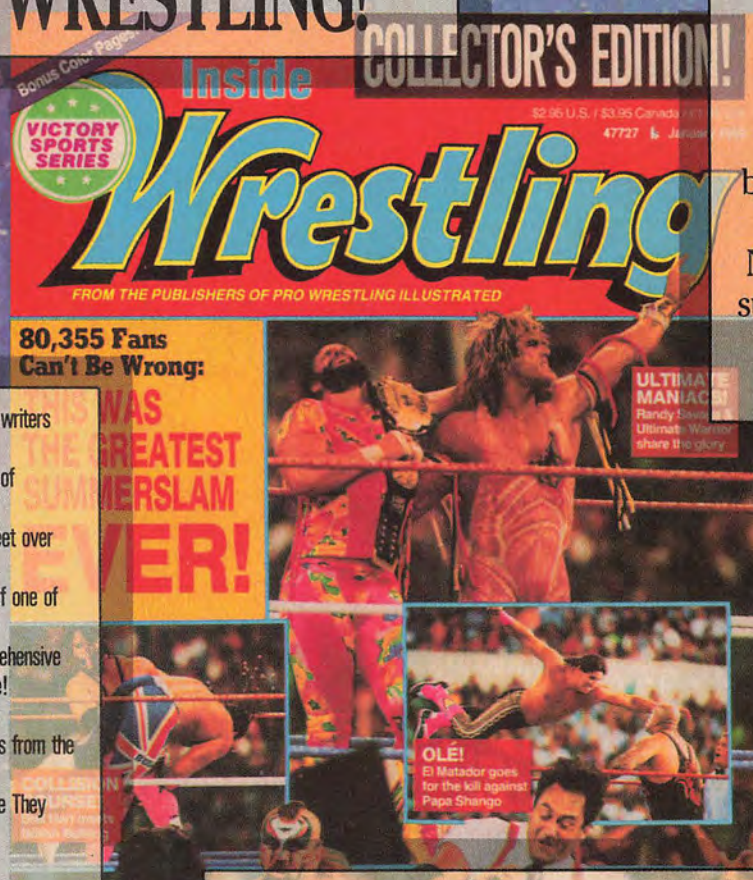
"THE 'ALL-AMERICAN BOY' BECOMES A MAN"



BOB BACKLUND vs. SUPERSTAR GRAHAM
February 20, 1978

In what still is regarded as one of the 10 greatest matches in WWF history, Bob Backlund brings Superstar Graham crashing down in an atomic spinecrusher before pinning him to win the WWF World championship at Madison Square Garden. Graham protested the decision, as his foot was on the ropes when he was counted out. That's an ironic twist, since Graham pinned Bruno Sammartino by blatantly using the ropes for leverage a year earlier. Backlund, among the most purely scientifc wrestlers in history, went on to defend his title with pride for 5½ years.

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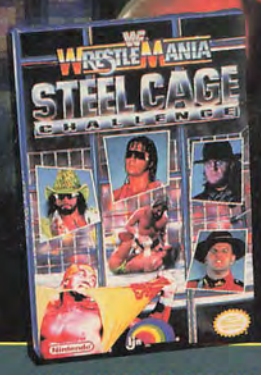
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